EXPLORING CONTINUING TRAINING NEEDS

IN NOVICE URBAN CHURCH PLANTERS

A THESIS-PROJECT

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF

GORDON-CONWELL THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE DEGREE OF

DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

BY

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MAY 2017

CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

ABSTRACT

As an explorative study examining the leadership development process of urban church planters identified most vital ongoing training needs in novice urban church planters.

The development of a biblical framework of evangelistic leadership led to the creation of an integrated model comprising four critical components of fostering evangelistic leadership capacity. This framework was critical for the categorization of identified ongoing equipping needs.

This study explored the continuing training needs in novice urban church planters and recommended seven key educational changes to better focus on those identified needs. Twenty interviews were conducted with urban planters leading within US and Canada.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Church Planting Explosion

Church planting seems to have captured the missiological imagination of a

generation, as multitudes of new churches are planted each year in the United States.

According to an extensive study based on the input of thirty-four denominational

statisticians, Protestants are planting new churches in America faster than their old

churches are closing. More than 4,000 new Protestant churches opened their doors in the

United States in 2014, outpacing the 3,700 that closed. On a weekly basis alone, 77 new

churches start while 71 churches close. The data clearly indicate that church planting is

not just a current missiological trend, but is becoming a seismic movement that will

change the trajectory of the church in the United States and the world. Ed Stetzer and

Daniel Im, who conducted the largest and most comprehensive research project ever

undertaken on church planting, according to Lifeway, partnered with seventeen

denominations and church planting networks and invited participation from over 12,000

leaders of new church plants, revitalizations, mergers, and sites, of which 1,200 pastors

and leaders completed the survey. They discovered four salient factors from these new

churches:

> First, church plants that were intentional about evangelism had more unchurched
> people in their congregations. Second, church plants that were intentional about
> having a highly public presence had a larger worship attendance. Third, church
> plants that were intentional about starting at least one daughter church within their
> first five years saw a consistent increase in attendance and more new
> commitments to Christ. Lastly, church plants that prioritized leadership

development saw more people make a decision for Christ.[1]

Peter Wagner, former professor of Church Growth at Fuller Theological Seminary concurs: "Planting new churches is the most effective evangelistic methodology known under heaven."[2] The current missiological trajectory seems to be indicating that most denominations are coming to embrace Wagner's conviction and are in the midst of integrating church planting as their primary strategy for evangelism. This seismic shift in planting new churches is most likely linked to unleashing the most evangelistic activity in the local church has seen in years.

Furthermore, according to Lifeway's 2015 National Church Planting Study, Ed Stetzer posits that in winning new converts to Christ, church plants are well ahead of the average church because of their focus on reaching the unchurched. American church planters say 42 percent of their worshipers were unchurched, while 43 percent switched from an existing church.[3]

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1. Ed Stetzer and Daniel Im, "Multiplication Today, Movements Tomorrow: Practices, Barriers and an Ecosystem," n.d., accessed June 16, 2016, https://newchurches.com.

2. C. Peter Wagner, *Strategic Growth* (Glendale, CA: Regal, 1987), 168.

3. "Church Planting 2015: Who Attends and What Attracted Them," August 12, 2015, accessed June 15, 2016, http://www.christianity today.com/gleanings/2015/december/church-planting-2015-who-attends-what-attracted-lifeway.html. For the study, Lifeway Research analyzed 843 churches started since 2008 by seventeen denominations and church-planting networks, i.e., the Assemblies of God, Baptist Missionary Association of America, Center for US Missions (Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod), Christian and Missionary Alliance, Converge Worldwide, Evangelical Free Church of America, Free Methodist Church USA, International Pentecostal Holiness Church, Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod Texas District, New Thing Network, North American Mission Board (Southern Baptist Convention), Presbyterian Church in America, Project Jerusalem, Path1 (United Methodist Church), Southern Baptists of Texas, Vineyard Church, and The Wesleyan Church.

The Challenge of the Urban Context

While church planting shows a track record as one of the most efficient

instruments for reaching the lost, according to the research it is also needed most in the

more secular environments, which tend to be the most unreached and unchurched areas in

the United States today. Ed Stetzer asserts the following in his study on new churches:

> The areas getting the most attention are the areas that already have the most
> churches. At the top of that list is the South. Already the most church saturated
> region in the United States, in our survey, Southern new churches accounted for
> 43% of all new churches surveyed. Texas, in particular, accounted for almost 9%
> of all new churches surveyed. While the South accounted for the most significant
> amount of new churches, the Northeast, home to a large bulk of the US
> population, and the most unchurched region in the U.S., received only 11% of
> new churches. The research is revealing that we need a significantly larger
> commitment to not just planting churches, but to strategically planting churches.[4]

According to extensive research, there is a desperate need for new churches in

urban centers, which not only represent a significant bulk of the United States population,

but also make up the most unchurched regions in the United States. Strategically, it

would make more sense to start more new churches in areas that have the least amount of

churches, but the exact opposite is happening. Clearly, this disparity is too vast and a

cause for alarm. Why is there such a shortage of new churches in cities that have the

greatest need for them?

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4. Ed Stetzer, Micah Fries, and Daniel Im, "The State of New Churches in the U.S.A," n.d., accessed December 28, 2015, https://newchurches.com. The survey asked well over 12,000 church planters to share their experience in a twenty to thirty-minute online survey across seventeen different denominational and church planting network organizations. About 12,000 church planters completed this survey, of which a reduced number of 843 fit the criteria of having been planted since 2007 and still operating today.

Tim Keller, speaking about the difficulty of planting churches in urban centers, posits, "Cities are extremely complex, secular, pluralistic, multi-ethnic places that take a great deal of theological sophistication to navigate."[5] In other words, doing ministry in urban centers is not only vastly different from doing ministry in rural or suburban context, but also much more difficult to navigate as a result of the increased complexity at work influencing cities. Keller's assertion about the compound nature of the urban landscape explains at least to some degree why such a shortage of new churches exists in more secular cities. The urban context is profoundly challenging, and most denominations feel inept and ill-equipped to plant more churches in cities. Consequently, urbanization presents four key distinct challenges that can make starting new churches in the city difficult. The four key hurdles are: (1) complexity, (2) pluralism, (3) uniqueness, and (4) multi-ethnicity.

First, multiple factors influencing the city simultaneously mean the complexity is compounded. As Keller mentioned, a great deal of theological sophistication is required to navigate through the triangulation of the city's pluralism, uniqueness, and great diversity. As a result, church planting in the midst of great complexity requires additional and greater analysis of the external environment and the surrounding context in the pre-planting phase.

Second, the city is pluralistic. As mentioned before, cities are not only the most unreached, but also the most unchurched and for good reason. The confluence of secularization and urbanization is curating a unique context where people of different

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5. Tim Keller interview, "New York State of Mind," Winter 2014, accessed March 11, 2016, https://www.rts.edu/Site/Resources/M-L/issues/ML_WINTER_2014.pdf.

socioeconomic class, religion, and race live in close proximity with one another. Although such diversity can be deeply enriching, it is also considerably challenging. As a result, ministering in a deeply pluralistic culture requires greater sensitivity to other cultures and viewpoints, especially when it comes to gospel proclamation and evangelistic outreaches.

Third, the city uniquely creates an environment for extraordinary opportunity, prosperity, and productivity. The confluence of all these multiple factors fosters a culture of innovation and curating creativity that is unmatched. The city, in essence, makes culture: as the city goes, so goes the culture.[6] Doing ministry in the midst of such affluence and influence also presents a unique mission. As a direct result of the great prosperity of the city, the cost of church planting is astronomically high. Creating a fiscally sustainable model for an urban context is critical for the survival of the ministry.

Fourth, as a majority of the global population migrates to urban centers, cities are becoming distinctively multi-ethnic. Urbanization is not only bringing people together who are different spiritually and socioeconomically, but also racially.[7] Since immigration is reshaping the center of the city and its culture toward faith and spirituality, church planters will need to develop a critical scheme to connect cross-culturally with minority groups and working-class immigrants who are increasingly making up the city's center. Developing a cross-cultural ethos in the initial vision of the church is of paramount importance in effectively engaging the city.

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6. Edward Glaeser, *Triumph of the City* (New York: Penguin, 2013), 7-8.

7. Albert Mohler, "From Megacity to 'Megacity'—The Shape of the Future," April 22, 2010, accessed March 4, 2015, www.AlbertMohler.com.

Exploring Ongoing Training Needs

Although urbanization provides a formidable challenge for the future of Christianity, some local practitioners and denominational leaders have attempted to tackle this hurdle and are strategically starting new churches in cities. Ed Stetzer and the North American Mission Board have launched a "send strategy" targeting key global cities in North America. In addition, Tim Keller, lead pastor of Redeemer Presbyterian church in New York City is a forerunner in targeting cities with the gospel and starting new churches in global cities. City to City, Redeemer's Presbyterian Church missions arm, helps new churches with an urban-centric focus.[8] City to City is city-based movement that has equipped church planters to start new churches in global urban centers. Redeemer has to date helped launch more than 350 churches in urban centers over the last two decades.

Even though City to City is one of the largest city-based church planting movements in the world today, it has not conducted an official study or carried out much analysis of its twenty years of ministry. The manager of content for Redeemer City to City, Clara Lee, asserted in an email correspondence, "We measure our success rate (i.e. churches that are launched and have remained open) and have lots of anecdotal evidence. As previously stated, with so much activity around church planting today, critical evaluation is imperative, but seemingly rare and infrequent. This is why an exploratory

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8. Ed Stetzer, "Five Future Trends of Church Planting," *Christianity Today*, April 25, 2016, accessed September 15, 2016, http://www.christianitytoday.com/ edstetzer/2016/april/future-trends-of-church-planting.html.

study of the ongoing training needs of the novice urban church planter is not only vital and indispensable, but also urgent.

Statement of Research Topic

In light of the above concerns, this study will explore fostering evangelistic leadership capacity in the light of continuing equipping needs in novice urban church planters. What are the equipping needs that must be addressed to expand evangelistic leadership capacity to engage a secular environment effectively with the gospel?[9] Ultimately, this thesis is an explorative case study of continuing training needs in novice urban church planters. To guide this study, four research questions were developed to ensure that a thorough analysis was carried out. Those research questions are presented below: (1) What are the ongoing equipping needs that should be addressed to foster evangelistic leadership capacity in an urban context for church planters? (2) What are the ongoing equipping needs that should be addressed to foster evangelistic leadership capacity in urban church planters, as identified through a biblical and theological analysis? (3) What are the ongoing equipping needs that should be addressed to foster evangelistic leadership capacity, as identified by urban church planters themselves? And (4) What key educational changes should be made to better meet the ongoing equipping needs in novice urban church planters?

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9. John C. Maxwell, *The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership: Follow Them and People Will Follow You* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2007), 1. Leadership capacity is the lid that determines a person's level of effectiveness in leadership. The higher the capacity, the higher the potential for greater effectiveness.

Research Method

The research was conducted using a qualitative method. An evaluative study methodology was selected based on the insights provided by Merriam in *Qualitative Research: A Guide to Design and Implementation*. As an explorative study, interviews were used to identify the most vital ongoing training needs paramount to novice urban church planters. Twenty church planters were identified who have planted new churches in an urban context within North America. The research included interviews with these church planters.

Theological Framework

In order to complete this study, it was first necessary to demonstrate that church planting itself is based on a biblical foundation, has historical precedents, and is applicable today. According to Richard Osmer, one of the main tasks of practical theology is to help the church and the world make sense of what ought to be going on by examining a situation through the lens of theology and scripture. He calls this task the normative task: "Using theological concepts to interpret particular episodes, situations, or contexts, constructing ethical norms to guide our responses, and learning from 'good practice."[10] The normal task was a critical component in evaluating Redeemer's City to City ethical norms and equipping practices for urban church planting.

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10. Richard R. Osmer, *Practical Theology: An Introduction* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B Eerdmans, 2008), 95-96.

Conceptual Models

The Burke-Litwin model was the primary methodology applied in this case study. Burke-Litwin posited that environmental factors are the most important drivers for change. Most change can be traced back to external drivers. Important elements in organizational success such as 1) external environment; 2) mission and strategy; 3) leadership; and 4) organizational culture are often impacted by changes that derive from outside the organization. The value of using a larger model is in the immediate recognition of the major variables that must be considered when the need to address change arises. Also, the model describes the use of feedback groups in data analysis and the utilization of interviews; in this instance applied to soliciting feedback from urban leaders who have planted within a secular urban reality. A detailed blueprint was devised to allow for a comprehensive study of each leader's church planting narrative using Burke-Litwin's model of organizational change as the primary lens. The researcher interviewed each church planter on leadership capacity, challenges, achievements and additional growth areas. Data was gathered and then evaluated.

Study Overview

The second chapter provides a literature review with a detailed focus on how the growth of urbanization is creating an expanding mission field for the church. It also addresses the first research question: What equipping needs should be addressed in order to foster evangelistic leadership capacity for church planters in an urban context? Since the emergence of urbanization is a critical aspect of the background to this study, the objective of this literature review was to provide a critical introduction to and exploration

of the growth of urbanization and its impact on church planting in cities that was based on precedent research.

Through an exegetical analysis, the third chapter develops the biblical, theological and historical foundation and warrant for church planting as a viable biblical application in fulfilling the great commission. Also, this chapter explores the second research question: What are the equipping needs that should be addressed to foster evangelistic leadership capacity in urban church planters, as identified through a biblical and theological analysis?

The fourth chapter highlights the methodology used in this research project and includes the reasoning behind it. The Burke-Litwin model was the primary methodology applied in this case study. The value of using a larger model is found in the immediate recognition of the major variables that need to be considered when the need to address change arises.

The fifth chapter is devoted to a quantitative, categorized overview of the equipping needs that were identified through feedback solicited from participants during interviews, qualitative input collected from urban church planters who provided evaluative feedback, and input on the interpretation of the data from the focus group.

The sixth chapter reaches a confluence of the data and project research and provides recommendations in how to better focus on the on going equipping needs most expressed by urban church planter themselves.

Limitations in Scope

This project is limited to interviewing twenty church planters. There was simply not enough time, samples or resources to go beyond this scope.

Lastly, there are potential limits in focusing exclusively on church plants in just one regional context, i.e. the Metro urban environment limited to the United States and Canada. Various factors, such as population density, political affiliations, social demographics and various economic issues can vary profoundly from one urban context to another, and might ultimately mean this evaluative study is not easily transferable. (For instance, the curriculum may be excellent in one location, but not valid in a different context.) Such contextual challenges and dynamics can create significant problems that impact upon the success or failure of the plant, or simply put, the needs identification process of church planters may be flawed.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

G.K Chesterton once remarked, "It isn't that they can't see the solution. It is that they can't see the problem."[1] Often hasty conclusions are the result of superficial analyses. As Chesterton noted, the problem can stem from a shallow understanding of a particular situation. John Swinton and Harriet Mowat suggest that the ultimate goal of practical theology is "to explore the complex dynamics of particular situations to enable the development of a transformative and illuminating understanding of what is going on in these situations."[2] In light of the above, the task of this chapter is to explore the first research question in the study: What are the ongoing equipping needs that should be addressed in order to foster evangelistic leadership capacity for church planters in an urban context?

The growth of urbanization is creating an expanding mission field for the church. As a result, the unique characteristics of the city, especially as a post-Christian, secular environment, are introduced and explored. What makes the church in the city a phenomenon of interest worth exploring is the uniqueness of the urban context. Since growing urbanization is a crucial aspect in the training utilized in the Redeemer City to City program, this literature review identifies equipping needs that must be addressed if church planters are to surmount the challenges they will encounter in an urban context.

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1. G. K. Chesterton, *The Complete Father Brown Mysteries Collection* (Book House), 635.

2. John Swinton and Harriet Mowat, *Practical Theology and Qualitative Research* (London, UK: SCM Press, 2006), v.

The preliminary task for the analysis is to establish maps that will provide a

focused introduction to the phenomenon of urbanization. Richard Osmer notes that

interpretive guides need to be identified and applied in order to reach a better

understanding of particular situations.[3] One critical map and guide is thus identified and

explored in this chapter, as a means of illuminating the complex dynamics of the urban

situation.

The main critical map chosen for this chapter was an experiential lens, reviewing

and exploring relevant literature by practitioners who have already navigated effectively

through the complexity of urban ministry. Although there is ample literature on church

planting in general and plenty of "how to" books containing practical recommendations

on starting new churches, there is not much literature available providing insight into the

phenomenon of interest, i.e. church planting in the urban context. The exceptions here are

thinkers such as Tim Keller, Stephen Um, Justin Buzzard, Al Mohler, Edin Villafane and

Ray Bakke. All of whom offer enlightening insights from practical experience in their

respective ministry contexts.

Experiential Lens

The primary map found in the literature focuses specifically on ministry

experience in global urban centers. Since the recent emphasis on urban church planting is

a comparatively recent phenomenon, the volume of literature available for review is

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3. Richard Osmer, *Practical Theology: Introduction* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B Eerdmans, 2008), 81.

limited. Most of it is the outflow of key practitioners who have effectively engaged and navigated effectively through the complexity, plurality and diversity of urban ministry.

Tackling Complexity

As a result of multiple factors working simultaneously in urban centers, doing ministry in cities is a complex task. In an interview about the recent partnership between Redeemer City to City and the Reformed Theological Seminary in Jackson, MI, Tim Keller spoke about the immense complexity of doing ministry in an urban context and the critical significance of theological education for urban pastors. Formal theological training is crucial in the future of effective urban church planting, he says, because "cities are extremely complex, secular, pluralistic, multi-ethnic places that take a great deal of theological sophistication to navigate."[4] Keller argues that greater complexity requires not only a higher degree of theological sophistication, but also essential multidisciplinary tools in order to process various colliding factors, such as race, economics, and religion. Urbanization is a global phenomenon that is not only reshaping the city (where we live) but also culture (how we live) and this confluence only adds to the complexity.

At the same time, it should also be mentioned that complexity can often lead to confusion and misunderstanding. Human beings have a tendency not only to generalize, but also to demonize what they cannot understand, and at times they fall captive to a profound fear. Um and Buzzard addresses some of these concerns:

It is our opinion that books about the city have often misunderstood and

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4. Tim Keller interview, "New York State of Mind," Winter 2014, accessed March 11, 2016, https://www.rts.edu/Site/Resources/M-L/issues/ML_WINTER_2014.pdf.

misrepresented the city. Much Christian literature about the city has focused merely on inner-city problems (crime, the homeless, etc.) and how an urban ministry might solve these problems, rather than providing a comprehensive analysis of the city. Intentionally or unintentionally, cities have been portrayed as places with a problem, rather than places of opportunity and blessedness.[5]

Um and Buzzard stress that the Christian community as a whole has developed a negative view of cities, and a subconscious and subtle bias is clearly present. The narrative that is usually perpetuated centers on negative generalizations and deleterious stereotypes. These generalities are primitive tribal projections and do not reflect God's heart or purpose for the city. Against this, Keller asserts in *Why God Made Cities,* that it is God who invented the city, and this is the reason he desires to use it and see it flourish. "A lot of people don't like the city because it is full of so many people who are different from them—politically, culturally, racially, and economically. No matter who you are, that's true. That's what a city is. You're not in a city if you look around, and everybody looks like you."[6] Keller argues that cultural complexity will always challenge and collide with cultural multiplicity. The negative default perception identified by Um and Buzzard and explored further by Keller illuminates why there is such a scarcity of new churches in urban centers: an unspoken bias is clearly present and at work. The complexity of the city exposes the insularity of evangelicalism, its propensity toward cultural homogeneity, and its dislike of complexity.

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5. Stephen T. Um, and Justin Buzzard, *Why Cities Matter: To God, the Culture, and the Church* (Wheaton IL: Crossway), 16.

6. Timothy Keller, *Why God Made Cities*, n.d., accessed March 16, 2016, https://static1.squarespace.com/static/ 5315f2e5e4b04a00bc148f24/t/53556fb2e4b0b8b008774203/1398108082122/Why_God_Made_Cities_by_ Tim_Keller.1.pdf, 34-35.

One clear example of this from of insularity and cultural homogeneity within

evangelicalism can be found in Christian literature. What is often missed and absent in

Christian literature is mention of the city's potential to add significant value to society.

The fact that the city can accelerate great innovation and social transformation is often

overlooked. The default designation with which many Christians seem to have grown up

is that cities are filled with crime and wicked temptations. In the following, Um and

Buzzard highlight both the great potential and danger of cities:

> The reality is bigger and more beautiful than what the evangelical portrayal has typically shown—the city is a wonderful, dynamic, exciting, and healthy place for people to live, work, and make a difference. *The default definition* with which many Christians seem to have grown up— "cities are uncomfortable, congested throughout this places lived with crime, grime, and temptation"—*is a definition* we hope to dislodge and disinfect throughout this book.[7]

Another example of evangelicalism's propensity toward cultural homogeneity,

and insularity is its epic failure to rise up socially when riots exploded in numerous urban

inner cities in the early sixties. Raymond Bakke, one of the leading pioneers in urban

ministry in America reflects on the cultural captivity and failure of the church under

pressure, which was revealed when riots exploded in Chicago, Newark, Los Angeles,

Detroit and other urban centers in the early sixties. Bakke recalls:

> Not only was my city on fire, but the evangelicals I knew were fleeing the city in droves. It was called the "white fright, white flight" syndrome. These were my people, the ones who had the "right view" of inspired, inerrant Scriptures, the "right view" of missions-the ones who believed "greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world." They fled! Nothing prepared me for the cultural captivity and failure of my church under pressure. If Christianity was not a game, if God's agenda was to empty the cities of Christian believers, then I assumed no

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7. Um and Buzzard, *Why Cities Matter,* 16.

sociological rationale should keep me there either, especially when my family was at risk.[8]

Bakke notes most white evangelicals in the early sixties were fleeing the danger of the city for the safety of the suburbs, abducting the power of the gospel and the great commission simultaneously. Social tension trumped biblical mission, as "white fright, white flight syndrome" overtook most of the church, leaving the city to crime and poverty without hope.

Evangelicalism failed the city and was a poor representative of God's kingdom. Bakke concurs with Um and Buzzard concerning the prejudices and negative vision evangelicals have of cities. He also provides two additional examples of evangelicalism's theological bias toward the city that he has observed in urban ministry:

> First, the city is not only dangerously amoral but also filled with senseless violence.
>
> Sodom is mentioned more than fifty times in the Bible. People who know almost nothing about the Bible seem to know a great deal about this city, for its reputation for sex and violence has flourished in the worldwide film industry. To the readers of Genesis, God's judgment on Sodom seems like a logical outcome. From the outset cities appear to have been a mixed blessing. In this context, Abraham's prayer for Sodom is very significant, precisely because it's a prayer of negotiation with God to save a wicked city.[9]
>
> Second, the city is filled with gross sexual immorality and debauchery.
>
> Most sermons I've heard over the years point to something like a gay-rights rights ordinance that permitted sexual behaviors that were totally out of control, immoral and perhaps illegal. I certainly do not want to commend Lot or condone the city for its sexual morals. But, according to the Bible, the city was not destroyed primarily for its sexual behaviors.[10]

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8. Raymond J. Bakke, *A Theology as Big as the City* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 1997), Kindle ed., Locations 143-149.

9. Bakke, *A Theology as Big as the City*, 143-149.

10. Bakke, *A Theology as Big as the City*, 369-371.

Bakke clearly establishes that deeply negative assumptions about cities can be found within evangelicalism, Christian subculture, and even in Christian literature. He notes that these prejudices are apparent because even people who do not know the Bible very well are keenly aware of portraits of cities found in the scriptures filled with danger, crime and violence. This bias within evangelicalism and its subculture has undoubtedly kept Christians from urban ministry and the city. As an example of this troubling bias in the church, Bakke shares a tumultuous experience he had when he first became a pastor in the inner city of Chicago.

> When I became a pastor in Chicago, my first community service was the funeral of the neighboring pastor and wife two blocks down the street from my church. They had been stabbed to death during the night in what is still an unsolved crime. One of their three preschool children stopped the postman at the door the following morning and plaintively asked, "Can you wake up my daddy?" As I described the situation to my mother later that week, she asked-doubtless doubtless thinking of my own little boys-"How long are you going to stay in Chicago?" I replied, "As long as I can count on other believers here. If I can't, I'll run far and fast." I did not then nor do I now intend to trivialize this principle.[11]

Bakke, Um, and Buzzard offer a unique lens that gives us a transforming understanding of what is going on within evangelicalism and urban church planting today. It is only human to fear that which we do not understand. This can help explain why almost half the new churches planted are in regions that already have the most churches (the South and Midwest), while only about a tenth of new churches are in areas where there are the fewest churches (the Northeast and Northwest).[12] A clear prejudice

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11. Bakke, *A Theology as Big as the City*, 362-366.

12. Ed Stetzer, Micah Fries, and Daniel Im, "The State of New Churches in the U.S.A," n.d., accessed Dec 28, 2015, https://newchurches.com.

against cities is evident in both evangelicalism and in Christian literature generally. This prejudice needs to be directly addressed and mitigated against, in order that the Christian community might see the true redeeming potential of cities.

Edin Villafane, as a Pentecostal/Puerto Rican scholar and urban theologian, offers a different voice from that of the dominant culture and speaks for working class immigrants and multi-ethnic younger professionals who are changing the trajectory of spirituality in the center of the city. He is also sometimes referred to as a "Pentecostal Liberationist." Some have thought this an oxymoron, but in reality the label makes sense when it is set within a theological understanding of the Holy Spirit as the Liberating Spirit. This is unique, since most practitioners who have written about urban ministry are evangelical and white.[13] Villafane notes that a more balanced perspective is needed when it comes to our vision of the city. It is a distinctive and eclectic lens for urban ministry because of his unique cultural, theological and positional viewpoint.[14] Villafane offers three critical implications for urban ministry when the church is armed with a biblical and spirit-empowered vision of the city. Villafane uses an analogy of a boat to illustrate various theological positions held by different streams of Christianity about the city.

13. James K. A. Smith, *Thinking in Tongues: Pentecostal Contributions to Christian Philosophy* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2010). Smith makes the integral connection between Pentecostalism and social action. This makes a lot of sense when justice is set within a theological understanding of the Holy Spirit as the liberating Spirit. Social action is the logical outflow of the work of the Holy Spirit.

14. Edin Villafane was voted one of the top ten most influential Hispanic religious leaders and scholars by the National Catholic Reporter, and is distinguished Professor of Social Ethics at Gordon Conwell Theological Seminary. He was also founding director of the Center for Urban Ministerial Education at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary in Boston, a multilingual and multicultural urban theological center that serves over 300 students, representing 150 distinct churches, from 40 denominations and 22 nationalities. He also previously co-founded and led the largest Spanish congregation in the United States at "Iglesia Cristiana Juan 3:16" in the Bronx.

First, Villafane notes cultivating a "transport boat" theology of the city is imperative if one is to survive urban ministry. Fundamentalists embrace a sinking boat theology of the city and favor an escapist view. Liberals embrace a "love boat" theology of the city and favor an overtly utopian view. A "transport boat" theology of the city does not favor an escapist view or an overtly utopian view, but embraces the dualistic tension the city often brings.

Second, Villafane posits that developing a theology of paradox (now, but not yet) in urban ministry is imperative if one is to succeed in the city. Armed with burning patience through the power of the Holy Spirit, leaders must learn to live in the tension of the age to come and the present age. A "transport boat" theology of the city refuses to romanticize its potential or fall into despair, but unwaveringly seeks God's shalom for the city.

Lastly, Villafane notes that developing a theology of "grit" in urban ministry is also essential. Urban ministry is not easy. The dark side of any city is hopelessness. Running and giving up is a daily temptation and seduction. As Bakke noted, most white evangelicals in the early sixties were fleeing the danger of the city for the safety of the suburbs, abducting the power of the gospel and the great commission simultaneously. Social tension trumped biblical mission, as "white fright, white flight syndrome" overtook most of the church, leaving the city to crime and poverty without hope. Evangelicalism failed the city and was a poor representative of God's kingdom.[15] Urban minsters must be armed with "burning patience" when failures become real. The church

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15. Bakke, *A Theology as Big as the City*, 143-149.

must expect much resistance and trouble in the city or it will not have the fortitude or the persistence not to give up.[16]

Villafane believes neither an escapist view nor an overtly utopian vision of the city is biblically warranted or even realistic. Both perspectives are prejudicial and must submit to the biblical paradox of God's kingdom here and now, but yet not fully. In the midst of that tension, Villafane calls for a "burning patience" when it comes to our vision of the city, notwithstanding its complexity and confusion, its chaos and crime, its heart cries and challenges, in carrying and seeking the shalom of the city.[17]

Tackling Immigration

According to Pew Research, fifty years after passage of the groundbreaking law that reshaped US immigration policy, nearly 59 million immigrants have entered the United States, bringing the US foreign-born count to 14 percent. In the last fifty years, these working class immigrants and their children have accounted for just over half the nation's population growth and have restructured the country's cultural and ethic composition. The new Pew Research Center US population projections show that if current demographic trends continue:

> Future immigrants and their descendants will be an even bigger source of
> population growth. Between 2015 and 2065, they are projected to account for
> 88% of the U.S. population increase, or 103 million people, as the nation grows to
> 441 million. Between 1965 and 2015, new immigrants, their children and their
> grandchildren accounted for 55% of U.S. population growth. They added 72

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16. Villafane, *Seek the Peace of the City*, 41.

17. Villafane, *Seek the Peace of the City*, 41.

million people to the nation's population as it grew from 193 million in 1965 to 324 million in 2015.[18]

In *The Reason for God,* a book about his initial experience as a new pastor in New York and his encounter with the impact of immigration on spirituality at the center of the city, Tim Keller states:

> My experience as a pastor in New York has given me another incentive to write this volume. As soon as I arrived in New York, I realized that the faith and doubt situation was not what the experts thought it was. Older white people who ran the cultural business of the city definitely were quite secular. But among the increasingly multiethnic younger professionals and the working-class immigrants there was a lush, category-defying variety of strong religious beliefs. And Christianity, in particular, was growing rapidly among them.[19]

In Keller's ministry experience, the outflow of urbanization was the direct result of the increasingly multi-ethnic younger professionals and working-class immigrants flooding the city and looking for faith. In other words, immigration has changed the trajectory of faith and spirituality in the city. Although the older white people who run the cultural business of the city are very atheistic and secular, religious belief is growing rapidly within multicultural pockets of working class immigrants migrating into the city. The *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* suggests the concept of multiculturalism relates to understanding and responding to the challenges associated with cultural and religious diversity.

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18. "Modern Immigration Wave Brings 59 Million to U.S. Driving Population Growth and Change Through 2065," Pew Research Center, September 28, 2015, accessed November 7, 2016, http://www.pewhispanic.org/2015/09/28/modern-immigration-wave-brings-59-million-to-u-s-driving-population-growth-and-change-through-2065/.

19. Timothy Keller, *The Reason for God: Belief in an Age of Skepticism* (London: Penguin Publishing Group, 2008), Kindle Edition, 228.

The term "multicultural" is often used as a descriptive term to characterize the fact of diversity in a society, but in what follows, the focus is on its prescriptive use in the context of Western liberal democratic societies. While the term has come to encompass a variety of prescriptive claims, it is fair to say that defenders of multiculturalism reject the ideal of the "melting pot" in which members of minority groups are expected to assimilate into the dominant culture in favor of an ideal in which they can maintain their distinctive collective identities and practices.[20]

This rejection of the idea of a "melting pot," in which members of minority groups are expected to assimilate into the dominant culture, is especially evident when it comes to the relation between minority groups and religion. Villafane, referencing an essay entitled, "Evil and the American Ethos" by Robert Bellah, about a festival sponsored by Henry Ford during the early 1920s, notes this is a gross example of the pressure of Americanization. A giant pot was built outside the factory. Into the pot danced groups of merrily outfitted immigrants humming their indigenous songs. From the other side of the pot arose a single stream of Americans dressed alike in modern outfits and singing the national anthem. As the tarantellas and the polkas ended only the rising melody of the national anthem could be heard as all the immigrants ultimately arose. There was immense pressure as this massive transformation amounted to a forced conversion to American nationalism.[21] Villafane provides three critical arguments why

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20. "Multiculturalism, " *Stanford Encylopaedia of Philosophy,* September 24, 2010, accessed August 31, 2016, http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/multiculturalism/ #JusForMul.

21. Villafane*, Seek the Peace of the City*, 43.

the church needs to develop a multi-ethnic consciousness for effective gospel witness in the city:

First, the melting point is not just a bad analogy it is bad theology. It has been made copiously clear to social scientists, educators, and various other disciplines alike that the idea of Americanization or absorption through the melting pot is imperialism and for some, culture domination by dominant culture, i.e., White Anglo-Saxon Protestants.

Second, the church must embrace the fact that ethnic diversity adds value to the American way of life. It has also been made amply clear that the annihilation of all ethnic dissimilarities is not a coveted or attainable reality for integration into the American way of life. The contribution of the many ethnic groups in the U.S.A. has been the factor that has produced the American way of life. The ethnic groups and values have been and are an undeviating asset in American life.

Third, ethnic diversity and gospel witness are inseparable in urban ministry. In pluralist country like the United States, there is an ingenious dynamic of ethnic diversity within coast-to-coast unity. The significance and legitimacy of cultural pluralism, enduring recent hesitations raised by some of our latest migrants, must be acknowledged if one is overcome the obscenity of ethnocentrism, and if the urban church is to meritoriously embody the transforming power of the gospel among ethnic minorities and working class immigrants.[22]

Additionally, working class immigrants are by no means assimilating into the dominant culture's attitude toward religion, but are instead taking an independent and

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22. Villafane, *Seek the Peace of the City*, 44-45.

antithetical position. Minority groups are giving rise to a spiritual renaissance in urban

centers. *The Economist* ran a story about this new spiritual renaissance emerging in urban

centers in an article entitled: "A New Jerusalem: Christianity is Collapsing Everywhere

Except London."

> There are two main reasons for Christianity's peculiar survival in the capital. The first is immigration. In the past few years, London has imported the descendants of many of the people who were converted abroad by 19th-century British missionaries. Kingsway International Christian Centre, which attracts more than 10,000 people to its Sunday services, claims that 46 nations are represented in its congregation, many of them African. Black African immigration is the chief reason for the rapid growth of Pentecostal churches in London. Immigration has slowed the decline in almost all denominations. In England as a whole, 12% of Anglicans and 17% of Catholics are now non-white.[23]

> Soong-Chan Rah, Milton B. Engebretson Professor of Church Growth and

Evangelism at North Park Theological Seminary in Chicago, also speaks about this

profound new reality facing American evangelicalism in the immediate future:

> The American church needs to face the inevitable and prepare for the next stage of her history-we are looking at a nonwhite majority, multiethnic American Christianity in the immediate future. Unfortunately, despite these drastic demographic changes, American evangelicalism remains enamored to an ecclesiology and a value system that reflects a dated and increasingly irrelevant cultural captivity and is disconnected from both a global and a local reality.[24]

> Along with Villafane, Rah makes a compelling case for the way American

evangelicalism is changing rapidly. For the first time in its history, the American church

is now looking at a nonwhite majority, as a new multi-ethnic American Christianity takes

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23. "A New Jerusalem: Christianity is Collapsing Everywhere Except London," September 21, 2006, accessed March 18, 2016, *The Economist,* http://www.economist.com/node/7947517.

24. Soong-Chan Rah, *The Next Evangelicalism: Freeing the Church from Western Cultural Captivity* (Westmont, IL: Intervarsity Press), 12.

center stage. The fact is, the American church is already going through an ontological

shift toward a multi-ethnic consciousness, as minority groups and working-class

immigrants reshape the urban church.

Clearly, there are signposts signaling a new spiritual renaissance in multiple urban

centers as minority groups and working-class immigrants are increasingly drawn to faith.

Ministering in global cities thus requires not only additional cross-cultural training but

also a deeper understanding of how immigration is changing the trajectory of spirituality

in the center of the city.

Tackling Racial Tension

Although immigration is changing the trajectory of spirituality in the center of the

city, racial relations between minority groups and the dominant culture have never been

more tense. Mark Galli, editor of *Christianity Today,* writes about issues of race, and in

particular about the tumultuous racial tension rising in the United States:

> Our nation and our churches are fractured by racial division and injustice. In the past two years, we've seen image after image of injustice perpetrated against black Americans. We've heard the anguished cry of a suffering community that is understandably hurting, angry, and demanding progress. Moderate white evangelicals, who make up the bulk of our movement, see more clearly than ever how racism is embedded in many aspects of our society, from business to law enforcement to education to church life. We have been slow to hear what the black church has been telling us for a while.[25]

Ministering in urban centers requires a deeper understanding of the tumultuous

racial tension that is eroding this country's sense of civility and community. The reality is

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25. Mark Galli, "Evangelicals and Race – A New Chapter," *Christianity Today,* August 22, 2016, accessed August 30, 2016, https://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2016/september/this-is-god-moment-on-race.html?type=next&number=9&id=135607.

that racism, bigotry and rising animosity between minority groups and the dominant

culture are not lessening, but increasing. Cas Monaco serves as Cru's Executive Director

for Leadership Development and in a recent article about racial integration in urban

ministry, grapples with the issue of race and provides three critical leadership insights

essential for the path to diversity:

> First, admit that you don't know what you don't know.
>
> My ethnic friends extend grace by repeating that phrase to me. You might think you know what it's like for your minority colleagues, but you probably don't. And nobody is more aware of your lack of knowledge than your brothers and sisters of color. Please, enter into this fragile conversation as a humble learner and listener.
>
> Second, seek out a mentor.
>
> Being part of Cru's leadership development team affords me the opportunity to reveal my ignorance in a very safe place. I'm not always sure what I don't know. Often I'm afraid I'll say the wrong thing and only perpetuate the problem. So, instead of making assumptions or remaining silent, I ask lots of questions. My colleagues afford me room to learn and grow. As a result, I've avoided making huge cultural mistakes and have forged new relationships along the way.
>
> Third, explore what it means to be a person of privilege.
>
> As a white woman, even after the lessons I've learned, I often tune out the news of yet another shooting. I shake my head in disbelief, "Another shooting. How terrible!" and go on about my business. I'm saddened by how easily I let these things go. All the while my minority friends lament the loss of yet another life. They are compelled, time and again, to remind the world that these people matter. The contrast between my response and theirs, I believe, is an example of privilege.[26]

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26. Cas Monaco, "Confessions of a Middle-Aged White Woman: 5 Leadership Lessons on the Way to Diversity," *Christianity Today*, March 17, 2016, accessed March 18, 2016, http://www.christianitytoday.com/edstetzer/2016/ march/confessions-of-middle-aged-white-woman-5-leadership-lessons.html.

Grappling with emotionally charged issues of race is vital for anyone seeking to understand the heart of a city. First, when entering the matrix of racial complexity, humility is of paramount importance. Second, seeking racial integration by oneself is not wise, and consequently seeking help from a mentor is imperative. Third, it is important to evaluate the power structures that exist between those who are privileged and those who live on the fringes.

As a Puerto Rican theologian and scholar, Villafane also offers a different voice from the dominant culture when it comes tackling racial tension in the urban environment. Villafane posits that the church can only reach working class immigrants and different ethnic minorities in the city with the gospel if we uphold and affirm those ethnic and cultural identities. When Christ comes to our lives, he does not come to destroy our ethnic or cultural identity. He places a "leavening" in us to forge a new identity. What is eliminated is the superiority of one over another and the possibility of imposing one identity on another.[27]

Tackling Pluralism

Research indicates that the spread of urbanization is creating the most expansive mission field the church has ever witnessed. Al Mohler, president of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, read the 2010 Special Report by the *Financial Times*, titled "The Future of Cities," and responded with strong language:

> This much is clear—the cities are where the people are. In the course of less than 300 years, our world will have shifted from one in which only 3 percent of people live in cities, to one in which 80 percent are resident in urban areas. If the

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27. Villafane, *Seek the Peace of the City*, 44.

Christian church does not learn new modes of urban ministry, we will find ourselves on the outside looking in. The Gospel of Jesus Christ must call a new generation of committed Christians into these teeming cities. As these new numbers make clear, there really is no choice.[28]

Simply put, there are more unreached people per square mile in cities compared to anywhere else in the world. The overall goal and theme of facilitating evangelism in secular, urban contexts is thus critical for reaching this growing mission field today. Mohler offers a unique perspective on how urbanization is creating a once-in-a-generation opportunity for massive evangelism. Mohler provides a critical map for urban ministry. The confluence of urbanization and secularization is creating an expanding mission field for the church as most of the global population continues to migrate steadily into urban centers, thereby creating a pluralistic environment. Webster's Dictionary defines "pluralism" as follows: "A situation in which people of different social classes, religions, races, etc., are together in a society, but continue to have their different traditions and interests."[29] Such diversity is beautiful from afar, but also deeply challenging up close.

Tim Keller asserts:

While skeptics have always been a significant part of Redeemer, now nearly 30 percent of our attendees are non-Christian. Many of them are steeped in religious pluralism and have little patience for claims of Christianity's superiority. Religious pluralism had taught the student he must never claim that one religion is superior to any other. Such claims are to be categorized quickly as intolerant. Maintaining my ministry to people of a pluralistic culture requires me to preach in

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28. Albert Mohler, "From Megacity to Megacity."

29. Learners Dictionary, "Pluralism," n.d., accessed March 17, 2016, http://www.learnersdictionary.com/definition/pluralism.

a way that neither forsakes the truth of Christianity nor needlessly alienates seekers.[30]

In others words, to maintain a ministry in a deeply pluralistic culture requires not only gospel competency but also gospel fluency. Sensitivity to other cultures and viewpoints is needed, but also a keen awareness of how and when to present the gospel both explicitly and implicitly. Craig Keener, a New Testament scholar at Asbury Theological Seminary, writing about modern pluralism, offers the following insights:

> A praiseworthy aspect of modern pluralism is that it provides more of a voice for minorities—whether for ethnic minorities, religious minorities like committed Christians, or others. A danger of modern pluralism, however, like that in the Roman empire, is that it can inadvertently appear to lend credibility to the claims of philosophic, moral, or religious relativism. 72 percent of Americans in the 18-25-age bracket believe there is no such thing as absolute truth; this view appears to be shared by over half of those who claim to be born-again Christians.[31]

Villafane posits, "One's religious experience is mediated through one's cultural reality. Without the particular ethnic background, the universal principles applicable to our time would be meaningless."[32] Consequently, it is of paramount importance that urban church planters grapple critically with the complexity of presenting the gospel in a pluralistic culture, and that they learn how to navigate effectively in such a culture. Villafane offers four critical ministry practices to effectively engage ethic minorities with the gospel.

First, identifying and empowering existing ethnic leadership is imperative for

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30. Tim Keller, "Preaching Amid Pluralism," *Christianity Today*. Winter 2002, accessed March 17, 2016, http://www.christianitytoday.com/le/2002/winter/1.34.html.

31. Craig Keener, "The Gospel and Modern Pluralism, Revelation 2:1-19," adapted from *The NIV Application Commentary: Revelation*, published by Zondervan (Grand Rapids, MI), September, 2011, accessed March 18, 2016, at http://www.craigkeener.com/tag/gospel-and-modern-pluralism

32. Villafane, *Seek the Peace of the City,* 44.

effective gospel witness to minority groups and working-class immigrants in the city. As Rah noted, for the first time in its history the American church is now looking at a nonwhite majority, as a new multiethnic American Christianity takes center stage. The American church is going through a radical shift toward a multi-ethnic consciousness as minority groups and working-class immigrants reshape the urban church.[33] It is the loftiness of "imperialistic evangelism" to assume unconsciously that there is no gospel witness amidst a specific ethnic group and that responsibility falls on the dominant culture. Empowering ethnic leadership means providing economic, political, material, educational, and human resources to the existing ethnic church. It is placing in their hands these resources with no strings attached.

Second, effective evangelism to minority groups and working-class immigrants in the city must be wholeheartedly and sincerely holistic. Although evangelicals have historically placed significant emphasis on gospel communication and proclamation, as a result of the major shift toward a multi-ethnic consciousness in urban ministry, an incarnational approach is imperative in an urban environment. The majority of our ethnic minorities are found in our great cities. As our cities go, so go our ethnic minorities. Consequently, today's urban and ethnic ministry often requires the expression of authentic community and fellowship as effective means and expressions of evangelization.

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33. Rah, *The Next Evangelicalism,* 12.

Third, the church needs to develop an education that is contextual to a multi-ethnic framework. We must honor and respect a given ethnic group's ontological identity. This involves a conscious concern to accent the characteristics of a given ethnic group by making prominent its history, culture, values, and beliefs. It means our curricula should be consistent with the goals of a multiethnic and multicultural society. Teachers and curricula within church schools serve as primary instruments for responding to the diverse needs of learners in a pluralistic society.

Lastly, there is need to develop an ecclesiastical structure that liberates ethnic minorities. In the words of Bishop Mortimer Arias, "the Lord accepts the culture which gives shape to the human voice which responds to the voice of Christ."[34] One's religious practice is certainly facilitated through one's ethnic experience. The particular context of ministry, with its distinct demographic trends, cultural/ethnic diversity, and socioeconomic reality, coupled with the "health" of the receiving and the original church, are the most determinative factors in the Spirit-led selection of Church Growth in America. We need to reflect seriously and pray so that the ecclesiastical structures that would "house" ethnic minorities be ones that provide for their full affirmation, growth, and freedom—structures that liberate![35]

Tackling Urban Economics

Another guide found in the literature is urbanization as a phenomenon viewed through an economic lens. Here the primary source is Edward Glaeser, economist and

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34. Mortimer Arias, *Salvation es Liberation* (Buenos Aires: La Aurora, 1973), 77.

35. Arias, *Salvation es Liberation*, 55.

professor at Harvard University. *The New York Times* reviews Glaeser's work, *Triumph of the City,* as follows:[36] Glaeser's essential contention is that "cities magnify humanity's strengths." They spur innovation by facilitating face-to-face interaction, they magnetize talent and refine it through competition, they inspire entrepreneurship, and they allow for social and economic mobility. Sliver posits that Glaeser takes us on a world tour of urban economics, collecting passport stamps in Athens, London, Tokyo, Bangalore, Kinshasa, Houston, Boston, Singapore and Vancouver. Glaeser explains how urban density contributed to the birth of restaurants, why supermarket checkout clerks demonstrate the competitive advantage such density confers and how the birth of Def Jam Records exemplifies the way cities compel artistic innovation.[37]

Glaeser highlights the four unique characteristics of global urban centers. First, the city is a center of great productivity. Major corporations choose to do business in the city because of productivity advantages that offset the high costs. Americans who live in metropolitan cities with more than a million inhabitants are, on average, more than 50 percent more industrious than Americans who live in smaller cosmopolitan regions. Also, there is a direct correlation between productivity and the overall optimism of the urbanite. In essence, people are happier and more satisfied in cities, which in part helps explain their increased productivity.

Glaeser postulates:

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36. Keller in the Center Church relied heavily on Glaeser's work to explain the economics of urban ministry.

37. Diana Sliver. "Up, Up, Up," *New York Times,* February 12, 2011, accessed March 18, 2016, http://www.nytimes.com/ 2011/02/13/books/ review/Silver-t.html?_r=0.

There is a myth that even if cities enhance prosperity, they still make people miserable. But people report being happier in those countries compares to non-urban centers. Across countries, reported life satisfaction rises with the share of the population that lives in cities. So cities like Mumbai and Kolkata and Bangalore boost not only India's economy, but also its mood.[38]

Mahatma Gandhi, echoing the sentiments of anti-urbanites, once said that "the true India is to be found not in its few cities, but in its 700,000 villages," and that "the growth of the nation depends not on cities, but [on] its villages." It turn outs the iconic leader could not have been more wrong. India's growth and productivity depend almost entirely on its cities.[39]

Second, the city creates wealth and prosperity. Sliver, an assistant professor of public health at the Steinhardt School of New York University states: "Cities spur innovation by facilitating face-to-face interaction, they attract talent and sharpen it through competition, they encourage entrepreneurship, and they allow for social and economic mobility."[40] Glaeser also postulates a critical causal relationship between prosperity and urbanization:

> There is a near-perfect correlation between urbanization and prosperity across nations. On average, as the share of a country's population that is urban rises by 10 percent, the country's per capita output increases by 30 percent. Per capita incomes are almost four times higher in those countries where a majority live in cities than in those countries where a majority of people live in rural areas.

Third, cities are centers of cultural intensity—for better or for worse. What makes a city a city is not so much population size but proximity between people. "Cities are the

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38. Glaeser, *Triumph of the City*, 7-8.

39. Glaeser, *Triumph of the City,* 7-8.

40. Glaeser, *Triumph of the City,* 7-8.

absence of physical space between people."[41] This is what gives the city its

distinctiveness and potency among all other human living arrangements. Glaeser asserts:

> Both phenomena are examples of the power of social interactions. One artist—
> Brunelleschi, Haydn—can set off a chain of innovation in his or her city. The
> Crips, the vast gang that now supposedly contains more than thirty thousand
> members, was founded by a few young men. Because cities enhance the influence
> of individuals—for good and ill.[42]

Fourth and lastly, the city is a center for curating great creativity. "Urban

Innovation doesn't mean just new types of factories or financial instruments; it also

means new cuisines and plays."[43] Urban density is directly responsible for the birth of

restaurants. In addition, the confluence of the city's ethnic diversity and cultural

creativity is, in essence, responsible for creating the world's greatest kitchens.

> Just as Romanians brought pastrami to New York and Italians brought pizza to
> Chicago, Indians brought lamb vindaloo to London. A great Indian meal in
> London provides a very pungent example of the benefits that immigrants often
> bring to cities. Large cities are varied enough so that there is plenty of demand for
> even the most specialized cooking.[44]

Simply put, cities amplify human creativity to reach its greatest potential in

culture, technology, architecture and the arts. Cities create culture, and as the city goes so

does the culture.

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41. Glaeser, *Triumph of the City,* 7-8.

42. Glaeser, *Triumph of the City,* 108.

43. Glaeser, *Triumph of the City,* 118.

44. Glaeser, *Triumph of the City,* 125.

Equipping Needs

Swinton and Mowat suggest that the ultimate goal of practical theology is "to explore the complex dynamics of particular situations to enable the development of a transformative and illuminating understanding of what is going on in these situations."[45] In light of the above, this chapter has been concerned with the first research question: What are the equipping needs that should be addressed to foster evangelistic leadership capacity for church planters in an urban context?

This chapter looked at the way key practitioners address the nature of the urban environment through an experiential lens. Identification of the two major factors determining the urban environment—complexity and pluralism—led to an examination of the generalizations and biases of evangelicalism towards the city.

A Renewed Urban Theology

The first equipping need that emerges from the analysis is the requirement for a renewed theology of the city. Um and Buzzard point out that the wider Christian community paint cities as places that are full of temptation, crime, and grime and that they are congested and uncomfortable. This they call evangelicalism's default definition.[46]

Keller asserts in *Why God Made Cities* that it is God who invented the city, and this is the reason he desires to use it and see it flourish. "A lot of people don't like the city

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45. John Swinton and Harriet Mowat, *Practical Theology and Qualitative Research* (London, UK: SCM Press, 2006), v.

46. Um and Buzzard, *Why Cities Matter,* 16.

because it is full of so many people who are different from them—politically, culturally, racially, and economically. No matter who you are, that's true. That's what a city is. You're not in a city if you look around, and everybody looks like you."[47] Keller argues that cultural complexity will always collide with cultural multiplicity.

The complexity of the city exposes the insularity of evangelicalism, its propensity toward cultural homogeneity, and its dislike of complexity. This default negative perception has certainly kept evangelicals mostly out of cities, thereby tragically forfeiting the potential to renew the city with the power of the gospel.[48] In response to the above, Bakke noted that most white evangelicals in the early sixties were fleeing the danger of the city for the safety of the suburbs, abducting the power of the gospel and Holy Spirit. Social tension trumped biblical mission, as "white fright, white flight syndrome" overtook most of the church, leaving the city to crime and poverty without hope.[49] Evangelicalism failed the city and was a poor representative of God's kingdom because of its poor theology of the city.

The truth is one cannot genuinely engage with a city one has been taught to fear. Cities need to be seen as holy also, for what makes them sacred is not their topography or massive density, but God's redemptive destiny. Thus a great deal of theological sophistication is required to navigate through the triangulation of the city's pluralism, uniqueness, and great diversity. As a result, church planting in the midst of great

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47. Timothy Keller, *Why God Made Cities*, accessed March 16, 2016, https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5315f2e5e4b04a00bc148f24/t/53556fb2e4b0b8b008774203/1398108082122/Why_God_Made_Cities_by_Tim_Keller.1.pdf, 34-35/

48. Stetzer, Fries, and Im, "The State of New Churches in the U.S.A."

49. Bakke, *A Theology as Big as the City*, 143.

complexity also requires additional and greater analysis of the external environment and the surrounding context in the pre-planting phase.

Gospel Fluency

The second equipping need that emerges from the analysis is the requirement for greater gospel fluency. Expanding and equipping evangelistic leadership capacity for urban church planters, Keller argued that to maintain a ministry in an intensely pluralistic culture, requires not only gospel competency, but also gospel fluency. Sensitivity to other cultures and viewpoints is needed, and also a keen understanding of how and when to present the gospel both explicitly and implicitly.[50] Villafane asserts, "One's religious experience is mediated through one's cultural reality. Without the particular ethnic background, the universal principles applicable to our time would be meaningless."[51] It is the height of imperialistic evangelism to assume automatically that there is no gospel witness among a particular ethnic group and that we are the ones to do it.

Villafane notes that in order to develop a greater gospel fluency, cultivating a multi-ethnic consciousness is also imperative. It is of paramount importance that urban church planters grapple critically with the complexity of presenting the gospel in a pluralistic culture, and that they learn how to navigate effectively in such a culture.

The city is pluralistic. As mentioned before, cities are not only the most unreached, but also the most unchurched, and for good reason. The confluence of secularization and urbanization is curating a unique context where people of different

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50. Tim Keller, "Preaching Amid Pluralism."

51. Villafane, *Seek the Peace of the City,* 44.

socioeconomic class, religion, and race live in close proximity with one another. Although such diversity can be deeply enriching, it is also considerably challenging. As a result, greater gospel fluency will help urban church planters to minister more efficiently in a deeply pluralistic culture. Gospel fluency will help urban church planters develop a greater sensitivity to other cultures and viewpoints, especially when it comes to gospel proclamation and evangelistic outreaches.

Multi-ethnic Consciousness

The third equipping need that emerges from the analysis is the requirement for a greater multi-ethnic consciousness. A new spiritual renaissance is emerging in many urban centers around the world as minority groups and working-class immigrants deviate from the dominant cultural position toward faith. Practitioners ministering in global cities thus require not only additional cross-cultural training, but must also grapple with how immigration is reshaping the center of the city and its culture toward faith and spirituality.

In Keller's ministry experience, the outflow of urbanization was the direct result of the increasingly multi-ethnic younger professionals and working-class immigrants flooding the city and looking for faith. In other words, immigration has changed the trajectory of faith and spirituality in the city. Although the older white people who run the cultural business of the city are very atheistic and secular, religious belief is growing rapidly within multicultural pockets of working class immigrants migrating into the city. The fact is, the American church is already going through an ontological shift toward a multi-ethnic consciousness as minority groups and working-class immigrants reshape the

urban church.[52]

Additionally, working class immigrants are by no means assimilating into the dominant culture's attitude toward religion, but are instead taking an independent and antithetical position. Minority groups are giving rise to a spiritual renaissance in urban centers. Urban church planters thus require a good grasp on the way immigration is reshaping the center of the city and its culture toward faith and spirituality, and thus develop multi-ethnic consciousness in the early DNA and ethos of the church for effective gospel witness.

Greater Sensitivity to Racial Tension

The fourth equipping need that emerges from the analysis is the requirement for a greater sensitivity to rising racial tension in the United States and around the world. Ministering in urban centers requires a deeper understanding of the heightened tension that is eroding the sense of civility and community in the United States at present. The reality is that racism, bigotry and animosity between minority groups and the dominant culture are not lessening, but increasing. Mark Galli, editor of *Christianity Today*, notes that our nation and our churches are fractured by racial division and injustice. In the past two years, we've seen image after image of injustice perpetrated against black Americans. We've studied the statistics. And most important, we've heard the anguished cry of a suffering community that is understandably hurting, angry, and demanding progress.[53]

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52. Rah, *The Next Evangelicalism*, 12.

53. Galli, "Evangelicals and Race: A New Chapter."

Grappling with emotionally charged issues of race is vital for anyone seeking to understand the heart of a city. Cas Monaco, Cru's Executive Director for Leadership Development shares those who belong to the dominant culture can sincerely engage and reconcile with other ethnic minority groups in an urban context. First, when entering the matrix of racial complexity, humility is of paramount importance. Second, seeking racial integration by oneself is not wise, and consequently, seeking help from a mentor is imperative. Third, it is important to evaluate the power structures that exist between those who are privileged and those who live on the fringes.

Villafane also asserts that this racial divide can only be repaired when those within evangelicalism begin to uphold and affirm minority groups' ethnic and cultural identities. Christ did not come to destroy our ethnic or cultural identities, but to forge a new identity in him. When clear equivalent ontological identity is established, what is eliminated is the superiority of one over another, and the possibility of imposing one's identity on another.[54]

Thus, as a majority of the global population migrates to urban centers, cities are becoming distinctively multi-ethnic. Urbanization is not only bringing people together who are different spiritually and socioeconomically, but also racially.[55] Since immigration is reshaping the center of the city and its culture toward faith and spirituality, church planters will need to develop a critical scheme to connect cross-

54. Villafane, *Seek the Peace of the City*, 44.

55. Albert Mohler, "From Megacity to Megacity"

culturally with minority groups and working-class immigrants who are increasingly making up the city's center.

Developing a cross-cultural ethos in the initial vision of the church is of paramount importance in effectively engaging the city.

Understanding Urban Economics

The fifth equipping need that emerges from the analysis is the requirement for a better understanding of urban economics. Practitioners doing ministry in urban centers must be equipped to better understand the powerful influence economic factors have on the city overall and even their ramifications around the world.

An exploration of urbanization through an economic lens provided by Glaeser addressed four unique characteristics of the city that make it truly urban. These four unique characteristics are high productivity, great prosperity, cultural intensity and magnified creativity. The city uniquely creates an environment for extraordinary opportunity, prosperity, and productivity.

The confluence of all these multiple factors fosters a culture of innovation and creativity that is unmatched. The city, in essence, makes culture: as the city goes, so goes the culture.[56] Doing ministry against such ample influences also presents a unique mission. Subsequently, as a direct result of the great prosperity of the city, the cost of church planting is astronomically high. Creating a fiscally sustainable model for an urban context is critical for the survival of the ministry.

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56. Glaeser, *Triumph of the City*, 7-8.

CHAPTER 3

BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

The following biblical and theological framework is in response to the second

research question of this study: (2) Viewed through the lens of a biblical and theological

analysis, what are the ongoing equipping needs that should be addressed to foster

evangelistic leadership capacity in urban church planters? According to Richard Osmer,

one of the main tasks of practical theology is to help the church and the world make sense

of what ought to be going on by examining a situation through the lens of theology and

scripture. He calls this task the normative task: "Using theological concepts to interpret

particular episodes, situations, or contexts, constructing ethical norms to guide our

responses, and learning from 'good practice."[1] The normative task was a critical

component in evaluating Redeemer's City to City's ethical norms and equipping

practices for urban church planting. Although this section will conclude with relevant

literature from urban ministry, it is important to first develop an exegetical foundation for

the normative task, to determine what should be normative in this situation through the

lens of scripture.

Responding to the need and urgency for church planting in cities, Tim Keller

founder of Redeemer City to City proffers the following:

> The vigorous, continual planting of new congregations is the single most crucial
> strategy for 1) the numerical growth of the body of Christ in any city, and 2) the
> continual corporate renewal and revival of the existing churches in a city. Nothing
> else—not crusades, outreach programs, para-church ministries, growing mega-

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1. Richard Osmer, *Practical Theology: An Introduction* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B Eerdmans, 2008), 95-96.

churches, congregational consulting, nor church renewal processes—will have the consistent impact of dynamic, extensive church planting.[2]

Although Tim Keller and Redeemer City to City are prolific in their ministry in an urban context, what biblical warrant is there to substantiate the claim that planting new churches is the most effective evangelistic application for growing the body of Christ in cities? Although such a vast and credible cumulative ministry praxis is worth exploring, this chapter pursues a theological and biblical rationale for urban church planting.

A Theology of the City

Developing a theological framework for the city is critical if we are to identify the equipping needs that must be met to foster evangelistic leadership capacity in urban church planters. In order to accurately understand and respond to the dynamic underpinnings of urbanization as a phenomenon, it is imperative to first develop a clear biblical theology of the city viewed through an exegetical lens. Keller notes: "The New Jerusalem is the Garden of Eden, remade. The City is the fulfillment of the purposes of the Eden of God. We began in a garden but will end in a city; God's purpose for humanity is urban!"[3] Developing a biblical theology of the city is of paramount importance if the church is to truly understand God's eschatological purposes for redemptive history.

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2. Tim Keller, *Church Planter Manual* (New York: Redeemer Church Planting Center, 2002).

3. Tim Keller, "A Biblical Theology of the City," The Resurgence, July 30, 2013, accessed December 1, 2016, http:// theresurgence.com/ files/ pdf/ tim_keller_2002_a_biblical_theology _of_the_city.pdf/.

The Divine Origin of the City

If redemptive history begins in a garden and ultimately culminates in a city, our biblical theology of the city must also be shaped by this eschatological reality. Keller boldly asserts that the city is God's invention and not "only" a sociological phenomenon or a byproduct of human origin or will. God inaugurated human history in a Garden, but he will culminate it in a city. In the beginning, God put Adam and Eve in a garden, but they were not to rest satisfied with this paradise. God told Adam to increase in number and develop a civilization that would honor him (Gen 1:27-28).[4] Although Adam failed, the second Adam (1 Cor 15:22) build a civilization that exalts God.[5] However, if redemptive history begins in a garden and ends in a city, we must first acknowledge that the architect for both the garden and the City is God himself.

In Chapter Two it was suggested that while evangelicalism would gladly concede the former, it would unquestionably struggle to embrace the latter. Urbanization as a global phenomenon is not only reshaping the city (where we live), but also culture (how we live) and this confluence only adds to the complexity. At the same time, it was also mentioned that complexity can often lead to greater confusion and misunderstanding. Human beings have a tendency not only to generalize, but also to demonize what they cannot understand, and at times they fall captive to a profound fear. Following these concerns, Um and Buzzard assert:

> Much Christian literature about the city has focused merely on inner-city
> problems (crime, the homeless, etc.) rather than providing a comprehensive

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4. All Bible references are from the NIV, unless otherwise stated.

5. Timothy Keller, "Understanding the City," July 5, 2011, accessed December 2, 2016, http://www.newcityindy.org/wpcontent/uploads/2011/07/understanding-the-city.keller.doc.

analysis of the city. Intentionally or unintentionally, cities have been portrayed as places with a problem, rather than places of opportunity and blessedness.[6]

Um and Buzzard emphasize that the Christian community as a whole has developed a negative view of cities, and a subconscious negative theology. Exegetically, if redemptive history begins in a garden and ultimately culminates in a city, our biblical theology must also be shaped by this eschatological reality, or the church will be in danger of falling ultimately into complacency. Bakke recalls most white evangelicals in the early sixties were fleeing the danger of the city for the safety of the suburbs, abdicating the power of the gospel and the great commission.[7]

Biblically, if the city is truly humanity's eschatological future and not a byproduct of human consequence—and most of evangelicalism assumes the latter—eventually heresy or apostasy is inevitable. Keller notes that in the initial part of the twentieth century the biblical motif of the city as Babylon was displaced, especially in the mainline Protestant understanding inspired by Dietrich Bonhoeffer, who wrote that the church was to exist only for the other. Because of the tendency of the church toward introversion and the loss of its character of mission,[8] developing a clearly biblical theology of the city is of paramount importance if the church is to join God in his eschatological purposes. Otherwise we will find ourselves fighting God and his will. If the city is a divine invention anointed by God to usher the kingdom, then it is the missiological mandate of the church to redeem and renew the city.

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6. Um, and Buzzard, *Why Cities Matter,* 16.

7. Bakke, *A Theology as Big as the City*, 143-149.

8. Bakke, *A Theology as Big as the City*, 143-149.

The Importance of the City

The author of Hebrews gives a vivid eschatological vision for an urban future in the eleventh chapter. Abraham through faith envisions an urban celestial city designed by God himself. Hebrews 11:8-10 reads:

> By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went. By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.

In fact, Abraham becomes the leading patriarch to the nation of Israel and the Christian faith because he leaves his father's home in Ur of the Chaldeans to pursue this heavenly city, choosing to sleep in tents in foreign lands as a sojourner and nomad until the end of his life. The author of Hebrews gives a clear exegetical warrant for the incredible significance of this city. The passage asserts that Abraham pursues the promise in spite of the precarious nature of the call, the fact he does not know where it is, and when or if he will ever arrive. But still he trusts and obeys. However, although the promise seems precarious at times, Guthrie notes that the promise is also overwhelmingly rewarding. In Haran Abram receives the word of the Lord (12:1–3):

> Leave your country, your people and your father's household and go to the land I will show you. I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.

The motif that runs through this passage is that the nature of faith inhabits a reference to the unseen. It is also significant that the promise that his offspring will inherit the land

does not come until Abraham is already in Canaan, and the promise will not be fulfilled by Abraham himself, but by his descendants. Also, perhaps more importantly, his choice of living in Canaan—sleeping in tents—deeply embodies his commitment not to settle in earthly cities, but to seek a more permanent city built by God himself.[9]

The Potential of the City

The Bible not only gives a vivid picture of the weightiness of the city of God, but also an incredible eschatological vision of its potential. The Apostle John envisioned through faith a beautiful urban heavenly city designed by God himself. Revelation 21:2, "I saw the Holy City, the New Jerusalem, coining down out of heaven from God and Revelation 21:10-11, "this beautiful city, shining with the glory of God." Keller notes that the culmination and purpose of Christ's restoration is the building of a city. Thus the New Jerusalem city is in essence the Garden of Eden, remade. The City is the fulfillment of the purposes of the Eden of God.[10]

Conn concurs with Keller regarding the city being the fulfillment and restoration of the Garden of Eden. Theologically, the city is the fulfillment of the paradise of God. This eschatological strand repeatedly ties the future of the city to the original, sinless past of Eden and its restoration in Christ. Even under the curse, humanity's cultural calling will be preserved."[11] Conn and Keller's contention is that the city is the eschatological

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9. George H. Guthrie, *Hebrews,* The *NIV* Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI, Zondervan, 2010), Kindle, 8734-8750.

10. Keller, "Understanding the City."

11. Harvie Conn, "Christ and the City: Biblical Themes for Building Urban Theology Models," in *Discipling the City,* ed. R. Greenway (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1979), 237.

restoration of humanity's original, once sinless past in the garden of the Lord. This assertion speaks volumes about the city's potential for the common good and the culmination of its eschatological glory in the kingdom of God.

Keller posits that if Adam and Eve had not fallen, they would have developed into a City, the city beautifully depicted in Revelation 21. It would have been a perfect city under God. This was in essence God's plan from the beginning. The City is the eschatological restoration of humanity's original purpose. So if God is a city builder who is building a spiritual city, though the earthly city is an establishment tainted by sinfulness, the church is called to work to restore human cities. As we are to redeem earthly families by spreading within them the family of God, so we are to redeem human cities by extending within them the city of God. We know that the power of family is such that, as your marriage goes so goes your life. So the impact of cities is such that, as the city goes, so goes humanity. In that sense cities have incredible potential to redeem culture and society.[12]

The Challenges of the City

As a result of multiple factors working simultaneously in urban centers, even doing practical theology is a complex task. Greater complexity always requires not only a higher degree of theological sophistication, but also essential multidisciplinary tools in order to process various colliding factors, such as race, economics, and religion. And because the city is both a place of great cultural intensity and incredible density,

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12. Keller, "Understanding the City."

everything in the city is both amplified and magnetized. The city is the great microcosm of humanity and it intensifies the duality in our nature, and hence the confusion. The theological question here is, if the city is ultimately God's invention and not just a byproduct of human consequence, then why does the city abound in so much injustice and sinfulness? How could the city be the Eden of God remade or the New Jerusalem if it is void of all celestial beauty and the glory of God?

Bakke posits that people who know almost nothing about the Bible seem to know a great deal about the wickedness of the city, especially its reputation for sex and violence. Thus, God's judgment on Sodom seems a logical outcome to many. From the outset cities appear to have been a mixed blessing. In this context, Abraham's prayer for Sodom is very significant, precisely because it is a prayer of negotiation with God to save a wicked city.[13] Clearly Bakke's contention is that evangelicalism subconsciously created a theology of place that is clearly unbiblical. One simply assumes Sodom should be condemned and abandoned, whereas the biblical narrative clearly points to a hope of salvation through intercession.

Keller suggests that it is sin that ruins the city and not the city itself. Since cities are intrinsically good, the problem with cities is not their origin, but rather humanity's propensity for sin. In essence, the contagion of the city is not external, but internal. The immense evil done in the city is not a consequence of its environment, but of its occupants.

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13. Bakke, *A Theology as Big as the City,* 143-149.

Cities are places of cultural diversity and incredible density, and sin uses this to create racism, classism, and violence. Additionally, when a city is divided by racism, classism, and violence, it produces a culture of pride, arrogance, excess, overwork, and exhaustion.

As previously asserted, the city is the great microcosm of humanity and it intensifies the duality in our nature. Humanity once tried to create a heavenly city apart from God in the tower of Babel. This ambition to be independent from God and reach the skies runs deep in humanity. The ambition is usually what attracts people to and from the city, the very thing God seeks to redeem and restore in humanity. Adam and Eve would have developed a celestial urban center with the influence and power endowed upon them by their creator. Apart from the fall, this city would have been untainted by sin and thus stunning.

The truth is, there are numerous challenges that the city bestows; it is divided by racism, classism, and violence, and produces a culture of pride, arrogance, excess, overwork, and exhaustion. Elites abuse their power and exploit the immigrants and minorities and in turn the working class ignores the poor and the most vulnerable in society. However, theologically these challenges are not the consequence of the city itself, but rather of human nature and volition.[14]

The problem of sin is clearly evident in both the garden and the city. One place is not more sacred than the other. Thus, forming a theological preference for one over the

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14. Sam Horn, "An Assement of and Response to Tim Keller's Theology of the City," n.d., accessed December 3, 2016, https://www.scribd.com/document/50550831/ Horn-Assessment-Tim-Keller-Theology-of-City-pdf.

other is biblically unwarranted. The problem of sin should not be impugned to the city because its origin derives from the human heart and not from the garden or the city.

Conversely, what is transferable from the garden to the city is the incredible potential of humanity when we are reconciled with God. The Bible paints a vivid eschatological vision of an urban future, a celestial city designed by God himself. The vision of the gospel is to see this vision come to full fruition, like a city on a hilltop that cannot be hidden, beaming God's light to the world and the universe. To this end the church must go, for the city of God is the future. How will this incredible eschatological vision be realized, however? Luke clearly asserts in the book of Acts that this eschatological reality can only be achieved by the power of God through the people of God. This theological framework of the city led to the creation of an integrated biblical model comprising four critical components that must be met to foster evangelistic leadership capacity in urban church planters, which will be explored further in the next section of this chapter.

Reframing Ecclesiology for the Twenty-First Century

The etymology for church comes from the Greek word *ekklésia:* ἐκκλησία, ἐκκλεσιας, ἡ (from ἔκκλητος called out or forth, and this from ἐκκαλέω); properly, a gathering of citizens called out from their homes into some public place; an assembly.[15] A careful exegetical study of Matthew 28:19-20 reveals a clear missiological imperative: "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father

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15. "*Ekklésia.*" Strong's Concordance, n.d., accessed March 22, 2016, http://biblehub.com/greek/1577.htm.

and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." Grammatically, there are four main verbs in this passage, including two participles, punctuating a greater emphasis on the last two verbs: *go, make, baptize (baptizing) and teach (teaching)*. Simply put, the singular goal of this community is to go into all nations and make disciples, teaching them the way of Jesus.

Exegetically, this passage not only makes a good case for church planting as an evangelistic application to organically grow the body of Christ in a region, but also for the need to cultivate evangelistic leadership capacity with regional leaders. This is clearly apparent in the way Jesus deliberately prioritized his ministry. Jesus spent the last three years of his life on earth equipping his disciples for the task of world evangelization. Drawing directly from the model Jesus used to equip emerging leaders, a vigorous and intentional equipping process was deployed in cultivating greater evangelistic leadership capacity.

Centrality of Evangelistic Leadership

From an exegetical perspective, it is apparent that world evangelization cannot be accomplished apart from cultivating greater evangelistic leadership capacity in regional leaders. This biblical reality seems also to have deeply influenced J. Allen Thompson, co-founder of Redeemer City to City and co-creator of the Church Leader Inventory Model, which is an integral component in Redeemer's church planting curriculum. The assessment process is designed to accurately and objectively gauge the developmental level of a leader in light of a competency model, in order that the leader might best

understand how to grow in his/her evangelistic leadership capacity.[16] Fostering a leader's

evangelistic capacity is critical in unleashing a gospel movement regionally. From the

beginning, Jesus envisioned the church (ekklésia) to be an entrepreneurial movement

with the task of world evangelization. Thus, church planting is not only a valid

missiological application but also a biblical imperative.

World evangelization through spirit-empowered leadership was the strategy God

deployed in Acts 1:8, where Jesus commands his disciples to wait on the Holy Spirit.

"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my

witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

Clearly, the missional scheme implied in this passage was an incremental global strategy

moving from Jerusalem (point A) to the ends of the earth (Point B). Craig Keener

postulates further:

First,

> Acts 1:8 is a paradigm based on salvation-historical priority, and Luke does not
> provide a clear indication of how his own audience should adapt it. Presumably,
> they, like the apostles, would start their mission at their own location.

Second,

> The geographic pattern of Paul's ministry in 26:20 closely follows the paradigm
> of 1:8 (cf. Luke 24:27), except that it appropriately starts where Saul found
> himself just after his conversion, and when it returns to Jerusalem, it returns to his
> home (cf. Acts 8:1). Yet Luke's primary audience in the sphere of the Pauline
> mission will most identify not with Jerusalem (or starting there) but with the fact
> that they are part of those carrying on the mission to the "ends of the earth."[17]

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16. Keller, "*Church Planter Manual.*"

17. Craig S. Keener, *Acts,* Exegetical Commentary, Vol. 1 (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2012), 1:1-247, Kindle edition, Location 31214.

From its inauguration, the ethical norm for the church was to be an entrepreneurial movement with the task of world evangelization. However, this incredible vision can only practically be accomplished through the effective deployment of human capital in the church. Hence, the development of a biblical and theological framework leads to the creation of an integrated model comprising four critical components for fostering evangelistic leadership capacity: Gospel-Contextualization, Prayer Strategy, Financial Oversight and Organizational Leadership.

Gospel Contextualization

The first critical component necessary in fostering a biblical model of evangelistic leadership capacity in ministry leaders is contextualization, which again draws directly from the model Jesus used to deploy emerging leaders for the task of world evangelization. As Lesslie Newbigin posits, "We must start with the basic fact that there is no such thing as a pure gospel if by that is meant something which is not embodied in a culture. Every interpretation of the gospel is embodied in some cultural form."[18] Biblically, this is true, because the gospel message is both retroactive and prospective.

Today we look to Jesus retroactively, while the prophets of old eagerly anticipated his advent in the future. There are three central implications to contextualizing the gospel. The first implication is the realization that the historicity of the gospel narrative is primarily Jewish in nature. It is indisputable that the beginning of the gospel narrative starts four millennia before the New Testament narrative, which

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18. Newbigin, *The Gospel in a Pluralist Society,* 144.

embraces the inclusivity of all nations through the work of Christ, and begins instead with the patriarchs and the nation of Israel. The gospel is retroactive in this sense: the comprehensive narrative of salvation is grounded primarily in a Jewish framework.

In other words, the narrative of Israel and the gospel narrative are inseparable. This is indisputable in validating the historicity of the gospel. Apart from the cultural and historical Jewish context there would not be a gospel to communicate. The gospel narrative is thus inextricably grounded in the cultural context of the nation of Israel.

The second implication flows out of the realization that the historicity of the gospel narrative is primarily Jewish in nature, and as a result, the gospel narrative is led primarily by Jewish leaders in the New Testament. We see this reality deeply influence and inform how Jesus selects the emerging leaders he decides to mentor, leaders who will eventually carry his message to the ends of the earth. The exceptions are Luke and Philip was a Hellenistic Jew in the book of Acts, who are not Jewish, but are nevertheless still primarily led and accompanied by apostles Paul or Peter. Philip was a lone ranger in Acts. Jesus chose Jewish leaders in his region because the gospel narrative was already set in a cultural context, which again proves gospel communication is impossible apart from gospel contextualization.

The third and final implication of gospel contextualization is more practical than the others. As Newbigin pointed out, contextualizing the gospel is not optional if one is to be missional in any context. Gospel contextualization is a missiological instrument utilized when communicating the gospel to any cultural situation. Especially when the cultural and historical context moves further away from its Jewish context. In a sense, the

practice of gospel contextualization bridges and differentiates the central message of the gospel within both cultures.

Um and Buzzard note that Christians have a propensity for making two very different but equally harmful blunders in their approach to the city: aborting their worldview or privatizing their worldview. Neither of these effects happens overnight— these are trajectories that begin as one first takes on a posture toward the city. Both individuals and churches can make these errors, which, put differently, are issues of over-contextualization or under-contextualization. The authors suggest three critical theological implications for when Christians and churches begin to contextualize the gospel in an urban context.

First, privatizing one's worldview leads to cultural irrelevance. It is ironic that the very media that helped the church connect with God in the past can become the very idols that block the move of God's Spirit in the present. We have become so fixated on the form that we can no longer seem to connect to God without it. Our addiction to method only points to the tragic reality that we have replaced God with form, and with it have become existentially obsolete to the culture around us. For the power of the gospel lies in the fact that God's living presence was not just demonstrated in the past, but is made accessible and available at this moment to anyone seeking his face. This is what Jesus meant all along when he boldly proclaimed, "Repent, for the kingdom of God is here."

Um and Buzzard note:

> If we underadapt to a culture, no one will be changed because no one will listen to us; we will be confusing, offensive, or simply unpersuasive. To the degree a ministry is overadapted or underadapted to a culture, it loses life-changing power.

We've watched many well-meaning believers abandon their Christian convictions for the sake of assimilating into the life of the city.[19]

The process of change can be painful and frightening because it challenges and threatens the security of our own theological paradigms. The truth is that most resist change at first because it threatens both our theological normalcy and our ethical norms. This is why contextualizing the gospel is received with such critical scrutiny and paranoia; we are afraid of crossing the line and losing the gospel. This theological tension is both good and healthy; the conflict leads urban church planters away from errors of either overadapted or underadapted to a culture and propels leaders toward a healthy tension.

Second, over-contextualization leads to apostasy. Michael Horton asserts that the church has already vulgarly over-contextualized itself and has already crossed the line. The American church has already sold out to the consumerist and prosperous culture surrounding it. Horton asserts that the emerging church is giving in to the "ultra consumerist culture" consummated in postmodernism and is in great danger of apostasy and forgetting the gospel.[20] Um and Buzzard concur with Horton in his view that if the church is not careful, over-contextualization can lead to apostasy. As an example, they share a story of a young graduate who moves to London to work for an investment firm. He arrives in hopes of "making it big" and securing a successful future for himself. He

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19. Um and Buzzard, *Why Cities Matter,* 91-92.

20. Michael Horton, *Emerging Church; Five Perspectives* (Grand Rapids MI: Zondervan, 2003), 111.

loves God and gets involved in a good church. But his driving desire to "make it" in the city, coupled with the pace, pressure, competition, and forces of greed in London, eventually result in a man whose Christianity appears to have worn away.

They suggest the following:

> If we overadapt to a culture, we aren't able to change people because we are not them to change. of young professional who becomes a managing partner at his firm in London, has spent the last five years conforming his life to the culture of his organization and his city. In the process he has left behind a once seemingly robust biblical worldview. Through his overadaptation, his Christianity has now morphed into a secular worldview.

This is precisely why being gospel centered and culturally relevant must be a both/and imperative rather than an either/or in the church. In order for the church to be effective in engaging the culture around it, the church must always live in the constant tension of engaging the culture without conforming to it.

Third, the church must acknowledge and minister within both tensions. The cultural practice of contextualization is not a new phenomenon. As Lesslie Newbigin noted previously, "We must start with the basic fact that there is no such thing as a pure gospel and if by that is meant something which is not embodied in a culture, every interpretation of the gospel is embodied in some cultural form." This tense question of, "Where to draw the line?" is not a new question, but an old one. Every generation of Christ followers have asked the same question, which tells us that cultural exegesis has been a non-negotiable element in every generation in Christendom. Even though this is a difficult and inconvenient theological conversation for most, the reality is every generation must engage their culture with the gospel narrative. Um and Buzzard state:

> To reach people we must appreciate and adapt to their culture, but we must also challenge and confront it. This is based on the biblical teaching that all cultures

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have God's grace and natural revelation in them, yet they are also in rebellious idolatry. If we overadapt to a culture, we have accepted the culture's idols. If, however, we underadapt to a culture, we may have turned our own culture into an idol.[21]

The tradition of the early church fathers acting as cultural exegetes and architects is deeply grounded in our Christian heritage and legacy. For the past twenty centuries in almost every part of this planet, the gospel has been effectively and repeatedly contextualized, making the life-changing story of Jesus accessible to all people around the globe. We must not forget that this critical challenge before us is not at all new and is absolutely necessary in order to reach a new generation for Christ. The futures of those who desperately need Christ are both our consequence and our responsibility. Whether we embrace change or resist it, what remains unchanged is that the result will be determined by what the church chooses to do at this precise moment in human history.

Contextualization as an Instrument

Clearly gospel contextualization was not optional for the apostles or the early church; they were all in essence cultural architects who studied deeply and grasped the complexity of their particular context with great sophistication. Cultural exegesis was used and practiced contextually in the early Church. For the past twenty centuries, in almost every part of this planet, the gospel has been effectively contextualized, repeatedly making it accessible to every nation, tribe and tongue. This great task and challenge is not at all new and is still absolutely necessary in communicating the gospel today.

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21. Um and Buzzard, *Why Cities Matter,* 91-92.

A good example of contextualization as a missiological tool for facilitating mission and evangelism through a biblical and theological lens can be found in the narrative of Luke 5:18-26: "Some men came carrying a paralytic on a mat and tried to take him into the house to lay him before Jesus. When they could not find a way to do this because of the crowd, they went up on the roof and lowered him on his mat through the tiles into the middle of the crowd, right in front of Jesus."

The story tells us of a few friends attempting to carry a paralytic on a mat to Jesus, but a large crowd blocking their entrance. The men were probably sweating profusely with their legs about to give out and unable to go any further. Instead of quitting, however, they chose not only to work harder, but smarter. They chose to make a hole in the middle of the roof and lower their friend down to Jesus. This narrative illustrates the power of thinking intelligently in context. They were able to think contextually, and as a result, their friend in great need experienced God's redemptive power, which changed his life forever. This narrative is also a metaphor displaying the importance of reading situations for gospel opportunities.

John Franke notes:

> While the dangers involved in accommodating Christian faith to particular contexts is real, the quest to construct theology free from the influence of culture is misguided. We simply cannot escape from our particular setting and gain access to an objective, transcultural vantage point. All views emerge from a particular location. Hence, all theology is, by its very nature as a human enterprise, influenced by its cultural context. The quest for a transcultural theology is also theologically and biblically unwarranted. As shown in the previous chapter, even divine revelation is always embedded in culture.[22]

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22. John Franke, *The Character of Theology: An Introduction to Its Nature, Task, and Purpose* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2003), 90.

Becoming more committed to evangelism or simply working harder will not get the lost

to Jesus in an urban context. Sometimes it is not the heart for evangelism that is flawed,

but its methodology. Simply put, contextualizing the gospel is not optional if one is to be

missional.

A Historical Example

In a 2006 article in *Christianity Today*, Tim Keller argued the need for a new kind

of urban Christian, referencing the history of the early church as an example of

facilitating mission and evangelism in light of the growth of urbanization. Keller notes,

> More *Christians should live long-term in cities.* Historians point out that by A.D.
> 300, the urban populations of the Roman Empire were largely Christian, while the
> countryside was pagan. (Indeed, the word *pagan* originally meant someone from
> the countryside—its use as a synonym for a non-Christian date from this era.) The
> same was true during the first millennium A.D. in Europe—the cities were
> Christian, but the broad population across the countryside was pagan. The lesson
> from both eras is that when cities are Christian, even if the majority of the
> population is pagan, society is headed on a Christian trajectory. Why? As the city
> goes, so goes the culture. Cultural trends tend to be generated in the city and flow
> outward to the rest of society.[23]

As Keller suggests, historically, when cities were Christian, even if the majority of the

population was pagan, society was headed on a Christian trajectory. Cultural trends tend

to be produced in the city and flow outward to the rest of society. However, based on

research already provided in this study, the very opposite is currently taking place today.

While the broad population across the countryside is Christian, cities are pagan.

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23. Timothy Keller, "A New Kind of Urban Christian," in *Christianity Today*, May 1, 2006,
accessed January 15, 2016, http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2006/may/1.36.html?start=2.

Christianity in a very broad sense has lost the city and as a result lost the culture. This missiological trend also partly explains the precipitous decline of Christianity in the United States. As the city goes, so goes the culture. Culture is released in the city and flows outward to the rest of society.

A recent Gallup poll suggests this unraveling is already at work in the next generation. When asked about their denominational affiliation, the majority responded, "none." "None" is how the majority of Americans now identify their religious or spiritual affiliation. This group of "nones" is in transition, on a journey and they are searching. A generation ago people inherited faith from their parents. If the parents were Presbyterian, then the children were Presbyterian. But "nones" have left behind an inherited faith, and while still believing in God, they are now investigating faith on their own.

Dave Ferguson affirms that, "we live at a very critical time in the spiritual trajectory of the United States and the world because of these group of 'nones'."[24] Perhaps, this unraveling in the next generation is a direct result of the church abducting the city to secularization. As already mentioned in this study, even the way evangelicalism starts new churches are centered primarily on the countryside, while mostly neglecting the city.[25] The ratio of new churches started in cities to the countryside is 1/10. This must change, 80 percent of the global populist now reside in cities.[26] If

24. Dave Ferguson, "Five Awakenings to Help People Find their Way Back to God," Pastors.com, March 20, 2010, accessed March 4, 2015, http://pastors.com/the-5-awakenings-to-help-people-find-their-way-back-to-god.

25. Ed Stetzer, Micah Fries, and Daniel Im, "The State of New Churches in the U.S.A," n.d., accessed December 28, 2015, https://newchurches.com.

26. Mohler, "From Megacity to 'Megacity'—The Shape of the Future."

history is any indication, if the church wants to save the country, it must reach the city, for as the city goes, so goes the culture. Greater perspective on the practice of contextualization and how it could be taught or modeled to urban church planters will be explored further in the end of this chapter.

Prayer Strategy

The second critical component necessary in fostering a biblical model of evangelistic leadership capacity is implementing a key prayer strategy. Drawing directly from the model Jesus used to equip and deploy his disciples for the task of world evangelization, it is apparent that a vigorous and intentional equipping process began with a critical prayer strategy. Two central applications of this practice are now explored.

First, the central application Jesus utilized was to identify whom to equip for the task of world evangelization. The narrative of Luke 6:12 clearly reveals that an enormous amount of prayer shaped the intentional selection of the Apostles: "Now during those days he went out to the mountain to pray; and he spent the night in prayer to God. And when day came, he called his disciples and chose twelve of them, whom he also named apostles." Exegetically, prayer was the main strategy Jesus used to guide the process of choosing his disciples. The narrative in fact tells us that Jesus was up all night till dawn praying. We clearly see that prayer grounded and guided choosing those who would plant churches and take the gospel to the ends of the earth. In one of the most important decision points of his messianic ministry, prayer guided and led the process. New Testament scholar Darrell L. Bocks makes three critical observations from this passage:

First, Jesus prayed all night before choosing his first disciples. The miscellany of those who would end up leading the early church after Jesus' ascension was no small detail. It was a matter of prayer—in fact, Luke shows that the choices followed a full night of prayer. The saturation of prayer shows its critical significance. No other New Testament text mentions an all-night prayer event. Jesus knew this selection process was the first of many appointments to put something in place that would endure beyond his messianic ministry.

Second, Jesus used prayer to depend on the Father and the Spirit's power. This passage is one of several where Luke connects an event with prayer (1:13; 2:37; 3:21; 5:16; 6:12, 28; 9:18; 11:1-2; 18:1; 22:41, 45). Conversation with God is vital to spiritual well being for Luke, specifically a humble posture as one advances towards God in prayer (18:9-14). For Luke, prayer is a tangible way of conveying our indispensable reliance on God.

Third, Jesus prayed to choose whom to equip for the work of the ministry. Jesus knew his messianic ministry would ultimately come to an end, and because opposition was building, he needed to form a new community around him. If Jesus was to be taken out of the picture, something else would need to be in place. New leadership was required. Hence, it is no coincidence that Luke places the selecting of the Twelve immediately after the remark about the beginnings of a conspiracy against Jesus. The twelve men Jesus chose would be particularly trained to lead the church.[27] Again, prayer

27. Darrell L. Bocks, "The Choosing of the Twelve (6:12-16)," in Intervarsity Press New Testament Commentary, n.d., accessed March 24, 2016, at https://www.biblegateway.com/ resources/ivp-nt/Choosing-Twelve.

shapes and informs the identification and selection of ministry leaders in the very

beginning of the church. In the narrative of Acts, it is written:

> Therefore it is necessary to choose one of the men who have been with us the whole time the Lord Jesus was living among us, beginning from John's baptism to the time when Jesus was taken up from us. For one of these must become a witness with us of his resurrection. So they nominated two men: Joseph called Barabbas (also known as Justus) and Matthias. Then they prayed, "Lord, you know everyone's heart. Show us which of these two you have chosen **to** take over this apostolic ministry, which Judas left to go where he belongs." Then they cast lots, and the lot fell to Matthias; so he was added to the eleven apostles. (Acts 1:21-26)

Peter quotes Psalm 69:25, referring to the fulfillment of Judas's betrayal of Jesus

during the Passion Week and the consequent leadership vacancy this would create. "It is

written in the Book of Psalms: 'May his place be deserted; let there be no one to dwell in

it,' and, 'May another take his place of leadership.'" It is evident that prayer was a central

and foundational practice in identifying and selecting ministry leaders in the early church.

The Critical Role of the Holy Spirit in Prayer

The second and last central application of Jesus' prayer strategy to equip his

apostles for the task of world evangelization was teaching them the critical role the Holy

Spirit plays in prayer. The good news of the gospel hinges on the person and power of the

Holy Spirit. In a sense, redemptive history is primarily initiated by God and can only be

completed by God. World evangelization is only possible when the church is empowered

by and through the Holy Spirit. This is why Jesus intentionally commands his disciples to

wait on the Holy Spirit in Acts 1:4-5, 8, before attempting the task of world

evangelization. Craig Keener makes two critical observations about the confluence

between the Spirit and the church.

Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit, But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.

First, Keener notes the outpouring of the Spirit always comes with prayer. Luke believes that the outpouring of the Spirit produces an eschatological empowerment (2:17). It is hardly likely that he would limit this eschatological experience to the past only. He presumably believes that it is accessible for those who seek to experience God's gift, like Jesus's followers who sought the outpouring of the Spirit in prayer and faith (1:14; 4:31; cf. 8:15; 9:11–12, 17; 10:4; 13:2–4; Luke 11:13) and/or who received this gift through the intercession of those who were known to be strong in it (Acts 8:17; 9:17; 19:6). Why else would Luke emphasize this point so often?

Second, Keener asserts that prayer fuels and propels the great commission. Luke presents the outpouring of the Spirit as the direct consequence of the ascension (2:33); as the confirmation that Jesus is the one sanctioned to pour out God's Spirit and thus the Lord and Christ (2:34–36). Here is the principal theological pivot of Luke's transition between the two volumes: as Jesus ascended, he sent the Spirit to his witnesses to carry on the mission (1:8–11). While the first commission focuses on designated apostolic witnesses (1:2, 8, 24; 10:41; later, cf. 9:15), the Pentecost event democratizes the empowerment and directive for all believers.[28]

Bakke notes that he has seen Holy Spirit-led men and women change entire cities. He shares a powerful story about the wife of a former mayor in Ethiopia. "Believe me

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28. Keener, *Acts,* Kindle loc. 6276.

when I say that ten Holy Spirit-led men or women can pressure and even transform huge

cities. It's happening everywhere. There is a relationship always between the presence of

the godly and the preservation of urban communities."[29] He continues:

> Jember Teferra was the wife of the former mayor of Addis Ababa during the last years of Haile Selassie's reign in Ethiopia. The coup that overthrew the emperor landed Jember's husband in prison. She carried two meals a day to the prison for him for three years. Then she was put into a prison with 150 women who hated her privileged status. She spent five years in prison. After her release, Jember went to England to earn a master's degree in community development. Then she went back to Ethiopia and has worked with up to 40,000 inner-city people, helping them build houses, working to provide schools, jobs, sewers, toilets and well-baby clinics. She has become the "conscience of the city" there in the slums.[30]

Bakke notes we live in a time when God's people are discovering the power of prayer in

and for cities. He recalls walking through a slum in Surabaya, Indonesia one summer and

meeting a visiting Christian family who had simply been assigned a weekly prayer walk

in a slum of Muslim refugees from the island of Madura. This dear couple became so

burdened during their prayer walks that they eventually moved into the community and

had a phenomenal ministry there.[31] He further states:

> God's people are organizing to confront the strongholds of the city, be they commercial, political, education or even cultural. Exorcism is a valid ministry, and because Christ has confronted and defeated the principalities and powers, has unmasked them and has rescued us from Satan's evil empire, we need not fear, but we will respect those concentrations of demonic power that remain in our cities.[32]

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29. Bakke, *A Theology as Big as the City,* 143-149.

30. Bakke, *A Theology as Big as the City*, 143-149.

31. Prayer walks are generally believers walking around a certain section of the city praying.

32. Bakke, *A Theology as Big as the City*, 401-412.

As Bakke reminds us, there exists a clear relationship always between the presence of the godly, the preservation of urban communities and the Holy Spirit's power and empowerment through prayer. Many contemporary discussions about prayer overlook this link with the anointed remnant, who are called to live within these communities as salt and light.

A Historical Example of Prayer

The *New York Times* featured an article on Tim Keller in 2006 entitled, "Preaching the Word and Quoting the Voice," declaring Keller the most successful evangelist in the city. Before the evangelical community became enamored with the astounding success of Redeemer and Tim Keller's Ministry in Manhattan, that same community cringed when Keller first started Redeemer in the late 1980s without a worship band, opting instead for classical music. Keller reasoned that urbanites would know Mozart but not Don Moen. It worked. Droves of secular people came to faith. Redeemer sacrificed its preferences and became a church not for itself, but for the city.

The *Times* reported how things have changed since the beginning, as pastors from around the world are beginning to come in a steady stream to New York City to glean what they can from Keller and Redeemer. Their goal is to learn how to create similarly effective churches in cosmopolitan cities like New York, places which exert outsize influence on the prevailing culture, but which have traditionally been neglected by evangelicals in favor of the suburbs.

The Times observed ironically that unlike most megachurches, Redeemer is a

traditional mainline congregation. Unlike most suburban megachurches, much of

Redeemer is uncannily traditional—there is no worship or rock band or showy video

production.

The *Times* also reported, after observing Keller's professorial pose on stage, that it

is easy to understand Keller's appeal. He has a remarkable rapport with his urbane

audience. While he does not shrink from difficult Christian truths, he sounds different

from many of the shrill evangelical voices in the public sphere. "A big part is he preaches

on such an intellectual level," said Suzanne Perron, 37, a fashion designer who is one of

many who had stopped going to church before she discovered Redeemer several years

ago. "You can go to Redeemer and not be a Christian and listen to that sermon and be

completely engaged."[33]

However, what is often missed and overlooked about Redeemer's amazing

success as an urban church plant in the heart of Manhattan is its prayer strategy. Cathy

and Tim Keller share the significant role prayer played in planting Redeemer in the

Upper East Side of Manhattan in 1989, a process with three critical turning points:

First, mobilized intercessory prayer heightens and increases God's work. Cathy and

Tim Keller share that the first major turning point in their ministry was the mobilization

of women in over 400 churches to pray for Redeemer in their initial planting stage. The

Kellers are convinced that no single church plant in the history of the United States had

more people praying for it than Redeemer. While they were raising support to come to

33. "Preaching the Word and Quoting the Voice," *New York Times*, February 26, 2006, accessed November 19, 2016, http://www.nytimes.com/2006/02/26/nyregion/ preaching-the-word-and-quoting-the-voice.html.

New York, they become the recipient of their denomination's Women in the Church annual Love Gift. Over 400 churches contributed. The total came to $75,000 in 1988. Taking inflation into account, $75,000 would be equivalent to almost $275,000 today. In retrospect, the Kellers believe the greatest blessing from the gift was not financial. Since the Love Gift had never been given to a single congregation before, it meant that for the first time thousands of women from over 400 churches were praying for a single church plant.

Second, prayer accelerates and compounds evangelistic momentum. Keller shares that the effects of increased prayer for Redeemer were evident to all. In the first year or so of Redeemer's ministry the sense of God's presence was often palpable. The gospel seemed brand new, sleepy Christians awoke with a start, and people were converted every week. The air was charged with a kind of electricity. Every decision turned out to be wise. Everyone performed above and beyond his or her gifts and abilities. Prayers were effective. Every week nearly everyone in the group had stories of non-Christians they were bringing to or meeting at Redeemer.

Lastly, prayer refocuses a leader's call and awakens their love for God. Most overlook the fact that Redeemer was literally born out of prayer. When Tim and Cathy Keller were first approached by their denomination about planting a church in New York City in the late 1980s, they turned it down. Tim Keller felt he had become spiritually complacent, and knew he didn't have the prayer life necessary for such a ministry. This sent him on a two-year quest to know God and find spiritual reality in prayer. As it turned out, the call to Manhattan circled back on him, and he ended up moving to New York City in 1989. Keller notes that without developing a deeper foundation in prayer, he

could not have answered the call.[34] Greater perspective on the practice of prayer and how

it could be taught or modeled to urban church planters will be explored further in the end

of this chapter.

Financial Oversight

The third critical component in fostering a biblical model of evangelistic

leadership capacity in ministry leaders is developing a greater competency and fluency in

managing finances. Steven Levitt, economist and professor at the University of Chicago

writes:

> Morality, it could be argued, represents the way that people would like the world
> to work—whereas economics represents how it actually does work. Economics is
> above all a science of measurement. It comprises an extraordinarily powerful and
> flexible set of tools that can reliably assess a thicket of information to determine
> the effect of any one factor, or even the whole effect.[35]

Borrowing from Levitt's etymology and perspective concerning the nature of morality

and economy, fostering evangelistic leadership capacity requires more than a vision of

what could be, but also a realistic expectation of what is. A dynamic tension between

faith and realism must exist for optimal impact. Thus, maintaining a dualistic tension is

critical. Bob Cooley, the longtime president of Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary,

points to the critical role between mission and economic vitality in leadership:

> Billy Graham saw the gospel as supra cultural, but not only did he understand the
> gospel as a unifier, but he also understood the interface between mission and
> economic vitality. That was critical to his leadership." Most ministers—or writers

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34. Tim Keller, "Prayer and the Life of Redeemer Presbyterian Church," September 26, 2014, accessed March 25, 2016, http://www.timothykeller.com/blog/2014/9/26/prayer-and-the-life-of-redeemer-presbyterian-church.

35. Steven Levitt and Stephen Dunbar, *Freakonomics, and Other Riddles of Modern Life* (New York: HarperCollins, 2010), 11.

or scholars or musicians—become so absorbed in their craft and mission, they don't think much about the necessary fiscal structure. Those few, who do, geometrically expand their influence.[36]

Billy Graham understood that his task would not succeed without economic vivacity. This is why fostering a biblical model of evangelistic leadership capacity requires the integration of financial oversight within the organizational structure. Because a dynamic tension between faith and realism must exist for optimal effectiveness and potential impact, maintaining a dualistic tension between the two is critical.

A Biblical Example of Financial Oversight

Drawing again on the biblical model of the way Jesus identified and deployed regional leaders for the task of world evangelization, it is also vital to understand the central intention behind his missional strategy. One can easily overlook the tactical layer in Jesus' leadership strategy, since most attention is directed towards his spirituality.

Bob Cooley once noted that the reason Billy Graham was so effective in accomplishing his mission was because he understood that mission and economic vitality were inseparable. "If you look at his leadership in many organizations, Billy led with his strengths, but he also made sure businessmen were in place and carrying fiscal responsibility."[37]

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36. Myra Harold and Shelley Marshall, *The Leadership Secrets of Billy Graham* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2005), 111.

37. Harold and Marshall, *The Leadership Secrets of Billy Graham*, 111.

Luke asserts in Acts 4:32-34 that the early church was sustained by the generous giving of people in its community. This passage informs us that the apostles from the very beginning of their ministry had to learn to raise and collect money for the many needs that arose for the early church. Pentecost brought over 3000 new believers into the Christian movement, according to Acts 2:31-35; it also came with an economic burden for the early church.

> All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of their possessions was their own, but they shared everything they had. With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And God's grace was so powerfully at work in them all that there were no needy persons among them. For from time to time those who owned land or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales and put it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to anyone who had need.

Collecting and distributing money for the needs of thousands of people was a difficult task the apostles had to learn, but it was mission critical. This is why developing competency in money management is of paramount importance for urban church planters. When our evangelistic activity outgrows sound financial practice, our representation of God suffers.

A Historical Example of Financial Neglect

A good example of why the integration of financial oversight is a critical layer in fostering evangelic capacity in ministry leaders can be seen in the recent closing of Teen Mania, reported by *Christianity Today* at the end of 2015. Teen Mania was a youth mission organization that filled stadiums all around the world for the gospel and world mission, but the organization's finances began to sour in 2008. Revenue was just $20.1 million after a dissatisfied donor canceled a $6 million pledge. Teen Mania's IRS Form

990 also revealed that the ministry had lost hundreds of thousands of dollars in the Creation Festival, an annual Christian music festival it had purchased at 50 percent interest a few years earlier. A 2014 audit reported that the $4.5 million investment resulted in a $2.5 million write down in 2008. Teen Mania's total revenue decreased every year thereafter. The organization's 2013 Form 990—the most recent available to the public—lists total revenue as $13.8 million. Teen Mania was also losing money on the Honor Academy—or more specifically, on the physical campus needed to house the program. Their bookkeeping system prevented the organization from seeing this.[38] Founder, Ron Luce, identified the adaptive challenges that arise when running a large missional organization.

First, there is the complexity that comes with managing large sum of money: "I don't think people realize the difficulty and complexity of running a multimillion-dollar organization," Luce said. "All they know is that they brought their group to this event, and it changed their lives and it was awesome."

Second is the issue of accounting practices harming the mission of the organization: "The Honor Academy was losing a significant amount of money every single year," Luce reports, "and it was eating into the whole rest of the organization." Teen Mania was a member of the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability (ECFA) and had some of the "brightest business people on its board," said Luce. But he said the organization's accounting practices—while "perfectly legal"—did them in.

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38. "Teen Mania: Why We're Shutting Down After 30 Years of Acquire the Fire," December 17, 2015, in *Christianity Today*, accessed April, 16, 2016, http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2015/december-web-only/teen-mania-why-shutting-down-acquire-fire-ron-luce.html?start=2.

Lastly, there is the issue of an organization losing creditability as the result of financial trouble: "Anytime a ministry gets into financial trouble, people conclude that there's someone who did something financially wrong," Luce said. "Well, I guess we're guilty of reaching as many kids as we could, thinking that our business model was sound. And it was for 30 years. My heart is so full of gratitude to the Lord."[39]

This is precisely why developing and integrating a higher capacity and competency in financial oversight is of vital significance. Neglecting the economics of mission can decommission a ministry permanently.

Organizational Leadership

The fourth and final critical practice in fostering a biblical model of evangelistic leadership capacity is developing a greater competency in organizational leadership. In Acts 6:1-4, increased conflicts arise in the early church over race, social services and mercy ministries, as the church in Jerusalem begins to grow rapidly:

> In those days when the number of disciples was increasing, the Hellenistic Jews among them complained against the Hebraic Jews because their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food. So the Twelve gathered all the disciples together and said, "It would not be right for us to neglect the ministry of the word of God in order to wait on tables. Brothers and sisters, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them and will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word." (Acts 6:1-4)

Harvey Cox speaks about the enormous challenge the early church and the Christian faith faced as it came to birth in a world of abounding and warmongering cities.

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39. "Teen Mania: Why We're Shutting Down."

Jesus himself began his ministry in Galilee, but he knew he would have to defy the depravity and tyranny of Jerusalem in order to complete his messianic assignment. After the Resurrection and the descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, tiny Christian congregations emerged in the great metropolitan areas of the Mediterranean world. In those diverse urban centers, Christians served the needs of the poor, and the gospel of life competed with the other living faiths of the day.[40]

Cox posits that Christianity encounters similar challenges to those the early church faced when it emerged from the great megalopolises of the ancient world. Cox suggests two powerful implications of the critical challenges the church faces as the result of urbanization.

First, urbanization is transforming the landscape of the world. Christianity once again lives in a world of competing views of life and bursting cities. Indeed, planet earth is rapidly being changed into what must seem from space to be a series of collaborative megalopolises, whose suburbs and supportive environments reach out and mesh with each other.

Second, Cox also notes that urbanization challenges the Christian church in many extreme ways. Once again the Christian church is confronted by a variety of contradictory views and values, and by fraught human need. This is the world in which all branches of the Christian church must now live and operate, and in particular, the evangelical stream of Christianity. Too many Christians today just pray aimlessly without

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40. Villafane, *Seek the Peace of the City,* 15.

engaging in either the destructive or healing powers that the Spirit of God can let loose in the cities.[41]

As explored in Chapter 2, without a comprehensive analysis of the great complexity and the plethora of multiple disciplinary factors that influence cities, leaders will be inept in overcoming the challenges urbanization often creates. The apostles did not encounter such complex challenges outside of Jerusalem when living in Galilee. However, it was imperative for the apostles to increase their organizational leadership capability when they began to lead in the city.

The truth is that complexity requires a greater degree, not only of biblical and theological sophistication, but also an expanding organizational leadership capacity to process countless conflicting issues at play. This is particularly so when it comes to grappling with race, and socioeconomics and incredible diversity in urban centers. Urbanization results in the convergence not only of different social classes and religions, but also different races.

Longenecker notes that pre-Christian prejudices may have reasserted themselves in the church. All of this contributed to the complaining that took place in the church. The word translated "complained" (*gongysmos*) is an unpleasant word, used in the LXX for the murmuring of the Jews against Moses in the desert (Ex. 16: 7; Num. 14: 27).[42] This particular leadership challenge clearly exemplifies why a critical integration of organizational leadership is paramount in fostering evangelistic leadership capacity. As

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41. Villafane, *Seek the Peace of the City,* 8.

42. Ajith Fernando, *Acts,* The NIV Application Commentary Book 5 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan),179-180

result of the rising racial and social tension in the community, the early church was now in danger of splitting.

Ajith Fernando observes:

> The problem might aggravate if it was not handled sensitively. There was a genuine problem, and the best way to quell doubts about prejudice was to solve the problem first. Thus, the apostles made an administrative decision. Thereby they not only averted a serious crisis of disunity, but also led the church to take a significant leap forward in terms of organizational structure.[43]

In response to Fernando's observation about the early church's significant leap forward in terms of organizational structure and expanding leadership capacity, Senge notes that when teams are truly learning, not only are they producing extraordinary results, but the individual members are growing more rapidly than might have otherwise occurred.[44] Through intentional deliberation and critical dialogue the apostles made an executive organizational decision that prevented the early church from splitting at a very critical juncture in its history. The apostles were deeply challenged by the great complexity of the megalopolises surrounding them, but expanded their organizational leadership capacity and were able meet the challenge. This tumultuous leadership challenge forced the apostles to learn together. If the early church was going to survive in its infancy, the leaders chosen by Jesus had to learn how to work together. Senge notes "team learning is vital because teams, not individuals, are the fundamental learning unit in modern organizations. This is where the rubber meets the road; unless teams can learn, the organization cannot learn."[45] Senge also identifies two critical connections between

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43. Fernando, *Acts,* 179-180

44. Peter M. Senge, *The Fifth Discipline: The Art & Practice of The Learning Organization* (The Crown Publishing Group), Kindle edition, 270-273.

team learning and leadership: First, team learning logically always starts with dialogue, the aptitude of members of a team to stop making assumptions and enter into a sincere "thinking together." To the Greeks, *dialogos* meant a free flowing of meaning through a community, allowing the group to uncover insights not achievable as individuals. Second, team learning requires discipline and mastery that comes through practice. To effect innovation in human behavior, the modules need to be seen as disciplines, with "discipline" here defined as a body of concepts and skills that must be studied and mastered to be put into practice. A discipline is thus a developmental path for obtaining specific abilities or competencies.[46]

Senge notes that as with any discipline, from playing the piano to electrical engineering, organizational learning is also mastered with study and practice. apostles in the early church learned this. They faced a complex challenge that arose in their external environment and which they could not control, but had to navigate through. This complex challenge threatened to derail their leadership and mission. The narrative of the early church clearly demonstrates a critical need for the expansion and growth of organizational leadership capacity, so that evangelistic leaders might navigate through complex challenges and not derail the great commission. Clearly, growing organizational leadership capacity and evangelistic leadership capacity are inseparable when leading through the complexity and adversity that arises in urban centers.[47]

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45. Senge, *The Fifth Discipline,* 270-273.

46. Senge, *The Fifth Discipline,* 270-273.

47. Senge, *The Fifth Discipline,* 270-273.

A Historical Example of Organizational Leadership

Tim Keller, while narrating the history of Redeemer recounts one of the darkest and

difficult moments in his personal ministry in New York City, proffers the following:

> As the staff continued to grow, my span of care was not stretched past breaking point and I was giving inadequate supervision. The Staff hated this and was discouraged. Physically and emotionally 1993 was almost certainly the hardest year for me. I was pretty dangerously exhausted. Thus, a search was made for an executive pastor who would function as Co-Senior Pastor and director of operations. Dick Kaufmann was hired and went on to completely revise the structure of the ministry. Under Dick, Redeemer's leadership decentralized into empowered leadership teams. Dick's detailed management of process slowly transformed us. Redeemer began to grow at a greater pace again from a place of stagnation.[48]

The tumultuous leadership challenge Redeemer faced in 1993 provides a good

case study in why organizational structure is vital in expanding evangelistic leadership

capacity in urban church planters. Keller explains that integrating the organizational

leadership structure was the third great ministry watershed moment in Redeemer's

history. The first two were the founding of the church as a super-outward faced

evangelistic body, and the re-orientation of the fellowship into a cell model.

As result, the newly integrated organizational leadership structure, along with its

super-outward faced evangelistic body, amplified Redeemer's witness to a whole new

stratosphere in the city. Keller credits Redeemer becoming a global church planting

movement with a focus on reaching large cities to be the direct result of this altering of

the organizational structure.[49]

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48. *Redeemer Church Planting Center Manual*, 17.

49. *Redeemer Church Planting Center Manual*, 17.

A Biblical Example of Critical Leadership Challenges

In his book, *Leadership without Easy Answers*, Ronald Heifetz considers it part of the leader's role to know if change is progressing at a rate that people can accept.[50] In other words, leadership is primarily about managing the expectations of others and hence its difficulty. One of the greatest adaptive challenges leaders face is when change occurs at a rate people cannot accept. A clear example of this type of adaptive challenge encountered by a leader is distinctly modeled and embodied in the book of Exodus. Moses tackled five critical leadership challenges when leading the people of God out of the wilderness in the narrative of Exodus. The five critical challenges are: (1) the crisis of trust; (2) the crisis of perspective; (3) the crisis of scarcity; (4) the crisis of entitlement; (5) the crisis of burnout.[51]

First, the crisis of trust: Why does it seem your leadership is making things worse rather than better? Moses encountered his first leadership crisis in Exodus 5: 19-21, when things seemed to be getting much worse rather than better. The Israelite overseers realized they were in trouble when they were told: "'You are not to reduce the number of bricks required of you for each day.' When they left Pharaoh, they found Moses and Aaron waiting to meet them, and they said, 'May the Lord look on you and judge you! You have made us obnoxious to Pharaoh and his officials and have put a sword in their hand to kill us'" (Exod 5: 19-21).

Second, the crisis of perspective: There is only one way this can end and that is

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50. Klimoski, O'Neil, and Schuth, *Educating Leaders for Ministry,* 170.

51. Moses tackling five critical leadership challenges when leading the people of God out of the wilderness in the narrative of Exodus is the researcher's own exegetical work.

badly. There's a grand loss of perspective (vision) reflected in Exodus 14:10-12, where the people of God quickly lost sight of how big God really was. It seemed things weren't going to end well and the people began to blame Moses and God. As Pharaoh approached, the Israelites looked up, and there were the Egyptians, marching after them. They were terrified and cried out to the Lord, saying to Moses, "Was it because there were no graves in Egypt that you brought us to the desert to die? What have you done to us by bringing us out of Egypt? Didn't we say to you in Egypt, 'Leave us alone; let us serve the Egyptians'? It would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the desert!"

Third, the crisis of scarcity: What is the point of freedom if we're going to starve? Moses encountered great scarcity, and there was not enough food to feed the people and there is nothing worse than trying to lead people who are hungry. "In the desert the whole community grumbled against Moses and Aaron. The Israelites said to them, 'If only we had died by the Lord's hand in Egypt! There we sat around pots of meat and ate all the food we wanted, but you have brought us out into this desert to starve this entire assembly to death'" (Exod 16: 2-3).

Fourth, the crisis of entitlement: "We don't want to just eat to live, we want to live to eat!" Moses encountered one of the worst kinds of crises in leadership: "entitlement." How do you lead people who are not grateful for miraculous bread in the middle of the desert, but want more? "The Lord said to Moses, 'I have heard the grumbling of the Israelites. Tell them, at twilight you will eat meat, and in the morning you will be filled with bread. Then you will know that I am the Lord your God'" (Exod 16:11-12).

Lastly, the crisis of burnout: "On the verge of a mental breakdown." In Exodus 18:

13-16, and without even knowing it, Moses is on the verge of a mental breakdown and experiences sure signs of burnout: "The next day Moses took his seat to serve as judge for the people, and they stood around him from morning till evening. When his father-in-law saw all that Moses was doing for the people, he said, 'What is this you are doing for the people? Why do you alone sit as judge, while all these people stand around you from morning till evening?' Moses answered him, 'Because the people come to me to seek God's will. Whenever they have a dispute, it is brought to me, and I decide between the parties and inform them of God's decrees and instructions'" (Exod 18:13-16).

Aiken and Keller, Senior Partners at McKinsey & Company, who have worked with CEOs and top teams to conceive and manage large-scale transformation programs that strengthen financial performance, customer focus, and employee engagement, explain why most reform and change initiatives fail. Empirically, and from the data they have gathered, they conclude most leaders fail to factor in the psychology of change versus the agenda of reform itself, and the truth is that what motivates leaders doesn't necessarily motivate followers. The vision and the agenda can be transformative and revolutionary, but without a committed tribe to complete the change, leaders have failed before they have even started.[52]

Moses faced adaptive challenges that arose in his external environment and which he could not control, but had to steer through. These complex challenges derailed his leadership many times and often lost him equity from the stakeholders he was leading. The narrative of the early church and the Exodus account both clearly demonstrate a

52. Carolyn Aiken and Scott Keller, "Irrational Side of Change Management," April 2009, accessed April 16, 2016, http://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/organization/our-insights/the-irrational-side-of-change-management.

critical need for the expansion and growth of organizational leadership capacity so that evangelistic leaders might navigate through complex challenges and not derail the mission of God.

Ronald Heifetz asserted that it is a part of the leader's role to know if change is progressing at a rate that people can accept. And because leadership is primarily about managing the expectations of others, one of the greatest challenges leaders will face is when change occurs at a rate people cannot accept, as Moses frequently encountered. This particular leadership challenge clearly exemplifies why a critical integration of organizational leadership is paramount in fostering evangelistic leadership capacity: weak leadership structure clearly derails the great commission. It becomes increasingly evident that growing organizational leadership capacity is imperative when leading through the adversity and complexity that arises in global cities.

Equipping Needs

The following biblical and theological framework was a response to the second research question of this study: Viewed through the lens of a biblical and theological analysis, what are the ongoing equipping needs that should be addressed to foster evangelistic leadership capacity in urban church planters?

According to Richard Osmer, one of the main tasks of practical theology is to help the church and the world make sense of what ought to be going on by examining a situation through the lens of theology and scripture. He calls this task the normative task: "Using theological concepts to interpret particular episodes, situations, or contexts,

constructing ethical norms to guide our responses, and learning from 'good practice."[53] Evaluating City to City's ethical norms was the critical goal of this chapter, using key theological concepts to interpret particular episodes, situations, or contexts in order to construct good practice for urban ministry and urban church planting.

First, developing a theological framework for the city was critical for the identification of equipping needs that must be met to foster evangelistic leadership capacity in urban church planters. In order to accurately understand and respond to the ontological underpinnings of urbanization, to develop a clear biblical theology of the city. If redemptive history begins in a garden and ultimately culminates in a city, a church planter's theology of the city must also reflect this eschatological reality. The Bible paints a vivid eschatological vision of an urban future, a celestial city designed by God himself. The vision of the gospel is to see this vision come to full fruition. To this end the church must go, for the city of God is the future.

Second, this chapter addressed the nature of the urban environment through a biblical and theological lens. This led to the creation of four critical practices for fostering a biblical model of evangelistic leadership capacity. The development of a biblical and theological framework of evangelistic leadership led to the creation of an integrated model of evangelistic leadership comprising four critical components for fostering evangelistic leadership capacity: Gospel-Contextualization, Prayer Strategy, Financial Oversight and Organizational Leadership.

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53. Osmer. *Practical Theology,* 95-96.

The first equipping need that emerged from the biblical and theological analysis was the requirement for Gospel-Contextualization. As Lesslie Newbigin notes, "We must start with the basic fact that there is no such thing as a pure gospel if by that is meant something which is not embodied in a culture. Every interpretation of the gospel is embodied in some cultural form."[54] Biblically, this is true, because the gospel message is both retroactive and prospective. Today we look to Jesus retroactively, while the prophets of old eagerly anticipated his advent in the future.

Gospel contextualization was not optional for the apostles or the early church; they were in essence cultural architects who studied deeply and grasped intricately the complexity of their particular context. Cultural exegesis was used and practiced contextually in the early Church. For the past twenty centuries, in almost every part of this planet, the gospel has been effectively contextualized, repeatedly making it accessible to every nation, tribe and tongue. This great task and challenge is not at all new, but is still absolutely necessary in communicating the gospel today.

A clear model of healthy and effective adaptation is when Tim Keller started Redeemer in the late 1980's without a worship band and opted for classical music in Manhattan and the evangelical community cringe in disbelief and disagreement.

> Keller reasoned that urbanites would know Mozart but not Don Moen. It worked. Droves of secular people came to faith. Redeemer sacrificed its preferences and became a church not for itself, but for the city. Is this not the way of Jesus? The prerequisite to following Christ requires a certain death. "Only those who lose their lives for the gospel will find it." It's ironic, but the Church's current captivity is in her inability to sacrifice herself for the world. Death is the only antidote from the spirit of the age.[55]

54. Newbigin, *The Gospel in a Pluralist Society*, 144.

55. "The Church in Cultural Capacity," March 23, 2016, accessed March 4, 2017, http://www.gospel-life.net/the-church-today-in-cultural-captivity/.

This narrative illustrates the power of thinking intelligently in context. Redeemer were able to think contextually, and as a result, many in great need experienced God's redemptive power. This narrative is also a metaphor displaying the importance of reading situations for gospel opportunities in one's own unique context. Simply put, being more committed to evangelism or simply working harder will not bring the lost to Jesus in an urban context. Sometimes it is not the heart for evangelism that is flawed, but the methodology. Contextualizing the gospel is not optional if one is to be missional or evangelistic.

The second equipping need that emerged from a biblical and theological analysis was the requirement for an intentional prayer strategy. Drawing directly from the model Jesus used to equip and deploy his disciples for the task of world evangelization, it is apparent that a vigorous and intentional equipping process begins with a critical prayer strategy.

First, Jesus utilized prayer to identify whom to equip for the task of world evangelization and leadership of the church. Prayer was the main strategy Jesus used to guide this process of choosing his disciples. The narrative tells us that Jesus was up all night praying. We clearly see that prayer grounded and guided the choice of those who would plant churches and take the gospel to the ends of the earth. In one of the most important decision points of Jesus's messianic ministry, prayer guided and led the process.

Second, Jesus taught his disciples the critical role the Holy Spirit plays in prayer. The good news of the gospel hinges on the person and power of the Holy Spirit. In a

sense, redemptive history is primarily initiated by God and can only be completed by God. World evangelization is only possible when the church is empowered by and through the Holy Spirit. This is why Jesus intentionally commands his disciples to wait on the Holy Spirit in Acts 1:4-5, 8, before attempting the task of world evangelization.

Lastly, as Keller models it, in Redeemer's church planting narrative prayer was the ultimate factor in the fruitfulness of his ministry in Manhattan. Keller identifies three results of an urban church planter developing an intentional prayer strategy. First, prayer refocuses a leader's call and awakens their love for God. Second, prayer mobilizes and awakens the laity for the work of the ministry. Third, prayer accelerates and compounds evangelistic leadership fluency and capacity. Clearly, developing an intentional prayer strategy is non-negotiable in urban church planting if leaders desire to be fruitful.

The third equipping need that emerged from a biblical and theological analysis was the requirement for greater competency in financial oversight. Fostering evangelistic leadership capacity requires more than a vision of what could be, it also requires a practical understanding of what is. A dynamic tension between faith and realism must be maintained for optimal impact.

Drawing again on the biblical model of how Jesus identified and deployed regional leaders for the task of world evangelization, it is also vital to understand the practical strategy he implemented in selecting and equipping potential emerging leaders. One can easily overlook the tactical layer in Jesus's leadership strategy, since most of the attention goes towards his spirituality.

This is why developing competency in financial oversight is of paramount importance for urban church planters. When our evangelistic activity outgrows sound

financial practice, our representation of God suffers. In addition, developing and integrating a higher capacity and competency in financial oversight is of vital significance. Neglecting the economics of mission can permanently decommission a ministry.

The fourth and final equipping need that emerged from a biblical and theological analysis was the requirement for greater competency in organizational leadership. Without a comprehensive analysis of the great complexity and the plethora of multiple disciplinary factors that influence cities, leaders will be inept in overcoming the challenges urbanization often creates. The apostles did not encounter such complex challenges when living outside of Jerusalem in Galilee. However, it became imperative for the apostles to increase their organizational leadership capability when they began to lead in the city.

Tim Keller recounts that integrating organizational leadership was the third great ministry watershed moment in Redeemer's history. (The first two were the founding of the church as a super-outward faced evangelistic body, and the re-orientation of the fellowship into a cell model.) Furthermore, Keller credits Redeemer with becoming a church planting movement and a local city movement as a direct result of altering the organizational leadership structure at Redeemer.[56] This is why it is imperative for novice urban church planters to be continually equipped to develop greater competency in organizational leadership. Increased organizational leadership expands evangelistic witness to a whole new level.

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56. *Redeemer Church Planting Center Manual,* 17.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The aim of this study is to explore the leadership development process in light of the ongoing equipping needs of novice urban church planters. As an exploratory study, the most significant goal is identifying the gaps in ongoing equipping needs that might prove critical for novice urban church planters. This task was accomplished by a three-fold strategy of reviewing relevant literature on church planting, reflecting on biblical antecedents, and by identifying vital equipping needs most suggested by urban church planters.

The first chapter focused on the critical challenges of church planting in an urban context. The second chapter provided a literature review with a detailed focus on the growth of urbanization and its challenges for urban ministry. It also addressed research question 1: What ongoing equipping needs should be addressed in order to foster evangelistic leadership capacity for church planters in an urban context? The third chapter, in response to research question 3, developed a theology of the city through an exegetical lens, which led to the creation of an integrated model of evangelistic leadership comprising four critical components of fostering a biblical model of evangelistic leadership capacity, Gospel-Contextualization, Prayer Strategy, Financial Oversight and Organizational Leadership. Lastly, all of the abovementioned were critical for the categorization of equipping needs in light of the ongoing training needs of novice urban church planters.

Review of Chapter Four

This chapter reviews the project design of the study briefly as follows: First, the rationale behind a qualitative project design is reviewed. Second, the rationale for using the Burke-Litwin model as the primary framework for the research methodology is also explored. Third, the rationale for employing individual interviews and focus groups as the main methods of collecting qualitative data in this study is further reviewed. Fourth, the selection of respondents and sampling method is explored. Fifth, the methodology used for interviews and data collection is unpacked, and lastly, the methodology for and utilization of focus groups is reviewed.

A Qualitative Methodology

A qualitative methodology was chosen for this study as a means of providing an evaluation that is "a rich, 'thick' description of the phenomenon under study."[1] According to Merriam, "A case study is an in-depth description and analysis of a bounded system."[2] Case studies provided a rich and thick exchange between theory and praxis that generated valuable insights for the phenomenon examined. The ultimate aim of case studies is to directly assist in acquiring lessons from past experiences and to develop general principles to support and evaluate the phenomenon under study.[3] In this study, the case was a group of church planters who have planted in an urban context.

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1. Sharan B. Merriam, *Case Study Research in Education: A Qualitative Approach* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 1988), 11.

2. Merriam, *Case Study Research in Education, 11.*

3. "A Case Study Evaluation Criteria," December 15, 2016, https://www.nap.edu/read/4896/chapter/12#127

As a result, this study also meets the other objectives of a qualitative study in that it is particularistic, and heuristic in rationale.[4] An inductive approach was used in collecting and analyzing data. This approach aimed to derive meaning from the data collected in order to identify patterns and relationships and to build a theory. In an inductive approach no hypotheses can be developed at the initial stages of the study and the author is uncertain about the category and nature of the research findings until the research is completed.[5]

Conceptual Framework

The Burke-Litwin model was the primary methodological framework applied in this study. Burke-Litwin posited that environmental factors are the most important drivers for change. Most change can be traced back to external drivers. Important elements in organizational success such as 1) external environment; 2) mission and strategy; 3) leadership; and 4) organizational culture are often impacted by changes that derive from outside the organization. As a result, the value of using a larger model is in the immediate recognition of the major variables that must be considered when the need to address change arises.

The Burke-Litwin model was the primary lens applied in the research because it provides a larger framework for recognizing the critical factors that must be considered in

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4. Particularistic means that the case studies focus on a particular situation, event, program or phenomenon. Heuristic means the case studies illuminate the reader's understanding of the phenomenon under study.

5. Michael Quinn Patton, *Qualitative Evaluation and Research Methods* (London; Sage,1990), 156.

order to increase organizational effectiveness for urban church planters. A detailed

summary of the Burke-Litwin model follows.

Burke-Litwin Model

Exeter University's human resource department explains in detail how to apply

these critical drivers for change. Burke-Litwin posited that environmental factors are the

most important drivers for change. Most change can be traced back to external drivers.

Important elements in organizational success such as 1) external environment; 2) mission

and strategy; 3) leadership; and 4) organizational culture are often impacted by changes

that derive from outside the organization.

The first major environmental driver for change in an organization is the external

environment. This comprises such factors as markets, regulations, competition and the

economy. All of these dynamics will have direct consequences for the urban church, and,

as a church planter, it is vital for leaders to continually scan the environment for issues

that will affect them and their team. As Burke-Litwin posit, in the public sector any

environmental change across health, local government and other public services will have

a direct impact on the work all organizations will need to to carry out. Consequently,

being able to read and respond to the external environment will be the single greatest

challenge for leaders in all organizations.

The second environmental driver for change in an organization is its mission and

strategy. An organization's mission articulates its reason for existing. It is the

groundwork upon which all movement within the organization should be built. The

strategy then sets out, in wide-ranging terms, how the organization will go about

accomplishing its mission. Very regularly, the strategy will be shaped by light of environmental change, and will have a significant impact on the work without and within the organization. Urban church planters will need to grasp change in strategy and be able to articulate the implications to their teams within the organization.

The third environmental driver for change in an organization is leadership. This ruminates the attitudes and conduct of senior colleagues and how these behaviors are perceived by the organization as a whole. The top team will largely influence the way in which change is executed and embraced through the organization. In essence, leadership ultimately shapes and defines the dominant cultural values within the organization. Leadership is not about doing things right, but rather doing the right things. It addresses the adopted cultural values within the organization. Followers will always question if leadership is really committed to change, or is it just another initiative that will disappear in six month's time? No matter how fervent followers are for change in an organization, apart from an intentional commitment from its leaders, only frustration will result.

The fourth environmental driver for change in an organization is organizational culture. Organizational culture can be designated as "the way we do things around here." It considers the beliefs, behaviors, values and conventions that abound in an organization. It is also important to understand that culture change does not happen overnight. It develops over time as a result of numerous other alterations in the organization. As urban church planters, one should keep in mind the imagined state for the organization, in terms of how people should behave (or not behave), and also what the organization truly values

as important and not. Leaders need to ensure that their values are sincerely embodied in their actions, demonstrating an apparent convergence of beliefs and deeds.[6]

Methods Used in Data Collection

In this study, two main methods were employed in collecting qualitative data: (1) Individual interviews were used to collect data from individual urban church planters; and (2) focus groups were utilized for further data analysis, comparative analysis and evaluation of individual church planters. The utilization of focus groups will be discussed in greater detail in the end of this chapter.

First, although the benefit of the qualitative approach is that the information is richer and provides a deeper insight into the phenomenon under study, the data collection method is time consuming and usually more expensive. Thus, because of time constraints in the data collection process, interviews were limited to twenty church planters.

Second, individual interviews appeared likely to provide more data than any other approaches employed. As Dexter points out, developing the correct tactics for data collection is critical when tackling specialized interviewing.

Lastly, there is the obvious point that interviewing is the preferred tactic of data collection, when it appears likely it will result in better data or more data at less cost than other tactics. At one time, the emphasis in social science research was heavily upon legal documentation. Then fashions changed, and many scholars now appear to regard interviewing as the "natural" way to tackle any question involving current data. This was

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6. University of Exeter, "Burke-Litwin: Understanding Drivers for Change," accessed April 1, 2016, https://www.exeter.ac.uk/media/ universityofexeter/humanresources/documents/ learningdevelopment /understanding_drivers_for_change.pdf .

the most promising and the least costly technique for obtaining the desired information.[7]

Sampling Method

The sampling method selected was "Judgment Sampling," which is a common non-probability interview approach. The sample was selected based upon the judgment of the author, selecting possible respondents who are truly representative of the entire population.[8]

First, it should be noted that the demographic range for the twenty respondents selected was that they were primarily male and living within the United States and Canada and ranging between thirty and sixty-five years of age. Also, most participants had some theological education and many had Masters' or doctoral level training. Ministry positions of participants mostly varied from leading planter to part of the church planting team. The majority of the participants were part of more than one church plant, occupying various roles.

Second, all respondents were limited to planting within the US and Canada. The outcome of the study can be of immediate benefit to future planters and their planting agencies located in a similar geographical context. This geographical proximity also made data collection much easier and more feasible economically.[9]

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7. L. A. Dexter, *Elite and Specialized Interviewing* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1970), 23.

8. "Sampling Methods," accessed Dec 15, 2016, www.uky.edu/~kdbrad2/EPE619/Notes/PowerPoint/Chapter5.ppt.

9. Although various factors, such as population density, political affiliations, social demographics and various economic issues can vary profoundly between urban contexts and ultimately mean this evaluative study is not easily transferable. (For instance, the curriculum may be excellent in one context,

Interview Method

First, the chosen interview method was semi-structured. This form of interviewing

is also sometimes called "focused interviewing." The method allows for a series of open-

ended questions based on topic areas the researcher wants to explore. This method was

also chosen because it gives the researcher the autonomy to probe the interviewee in

order to elaborate upon or to follow a new line of inquiry introduced by what the

interviewee is saying, a strategy that works best when the interviewer has a number of

areas he/she wants to be sure to address.[10]

Second, this interview approach was also selected because it accommodates the

integration of the four critical drivers of organizational change found in the Burke-Litwin

model: 1) external environment; 2) mission and strategy; 3) leadership; and 4)

organizational culture during the interview process. The Burke-Litwin model not only

provides a larger framework for the study as a whole, but it also limits the investigator's

influence during the individual interview process. Dexter lists three critical components

in achieving freedom from investigator influence. Investigator influence refers to an

interview with any interviewee—and stress should be placed on the world "any"—who in

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but not effective in an alternative context.) The contextual challenges and dynamics can create significant problems that impact upon the success or failure of the church plant, or simply put, the needs identification process of church planters may be flawed as well.

10. "Unit 6 Qualitative Research," Interviews, accessed December 15, 2016, http://libweb.surrey.ac.uk/library/skills/Introduction%20to%20Research%20and%20Managing%20Information%20Leicester/page_55.htm.

terms of the current purposes of the interviewer is given special, non-standardized

treatment. It is important to 1) stress the interviewee's definition of the situation; 2)

encourage the interviewee to structure the account of the situation; and 3) to let the

interviewee introduce to a considerable extent (an extent which will of course vary from

project to project and interviewer) his or her notions of what he or she regards as

relevant, rather than rely upon the investigator's notion of relevance.[11]

Third, the Burke-Litwin framework was also used to construct and shape the

interview questions. This was a second fail-safe tactic implemented to shield participants

from investigator influence. The introduction of homogenous and standardized scripts for

all the interviewees was developed, following Dexter's list of three critical components in

achieving freedom from investigator influence already mentioned above. This was

created using the Burke-Litwin framework for each interview. Each participant was asked

about the same four critical drivers of organizational change: 1) external environment; 2)

mission and strategy 3) leadership; and 4) organizational culture during their individual

interview.[12]

Lastly, it should also be noted that in issues surrounding confidentiality, all

participants in this study gave prior permission for disclosure of information related to

the assessment to be reviewed and utilized. In addition, all remarks from participants

were identified as anonymous.

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11. Dexter, *Elite and Specialized Interviewing*, 17.

12. See Appendix 3 for the official interview transcript.

Method Used in Evaluation

First, in order to maintain consistent fluency in data collection, the author of this study reviewed each individual interview, congregation by congregation, over a limited time span of two months. Also, each individual interview and focus groups were recorded electronically and then transcribed by the author's administrative assistant at his church.[13] From this review, all highlighted equipping needs described in the interviews were firstly listed and differentiated from other responses.

Second, if any specific highlighted equipping need was repeated, a numerical count was made to track the number of responses for that need. Upon finalization of data gathering, the highlighted equipping needs were itemized from those with the greatest numerical count to those with the least.

Third, if any one specific equipping need was repeated more than once, the identified equipping need would have been expressed by more than 20 percent of participants in the study, and consequently merited further exploration in order to gain a richer and more descriptive understanding of the reasoning behind that particular need. Representative quotations from the rationale given were then selected to provide a richer narrative that went beyond the bare analysis of the data.

In *Qualitative Data Analysis*, Miles and Huberman posit that counting "is an obvious means of finding out what's there," but that qualitative researchers often ignore this as being too quantitative.[14] However, Miles and Huberman contend that the counting

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13. See Appendix 3, Interview Feedback Data Summary.

14. M. B Miles and A. M Huberman, *Qualitative Data Analysis: A Source of New Methods*, (Newbury Park, CA; Sage, 1984), 215.

approach should be considered valid, because in either a quantitative or qualitative study, "when we identify a theme or pattern, we are isolating something (a) that happens a number of times and (b) that consistently appears in a specific way."[15]

Consequently, as Merriam asserts, "in indicating that something is 'important' or 'significant' or 'recurrent', we have achieved that estimate in part by making counts, comparisons, and weights."[16] In addition, Merriam identifies the three benefits of "counting" as: 1) providing an idea of the general drift or state; 2) being useful in testing or supporting or verifying an emergency hypothesis; and 3) forming protection against investigator bias.[17]

Lastly, the review of data collection provided a clear response to the four research question by identifying, quantifying, listing, and qualitatively articulating the ongoing equipping needs identified by urban church planters.

The Utilization of Focus Groups

In addition to the data collection from individual interviews, a focus group was utilized for further data analysis, comparative analysis and evaluation of the individual City to City church planters. The utilization of this focus group provided additional internal reliability to the study through investigator triangulation. First, Denzin posits that, "triangulating observers removes the potential bias that comes from a single person and ensures a greater reliability in observations." Second, investigator triangulation

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15. Miles and Huberman, *Qualitative Data Analysis*, 215.

16. Merriam, *Case Study Research in Education*, 148.

17. Merriam, *Case Study Research in Education*, 215-6.

expands the interpretive base of the research and reveals elements of the phenomenon that would not necessarily be seen by just one researcher."[18] The process of triangulation seeks to use multiple investigators' sources of data and other methods to validate findings.

In terms of function, the focus group participants were asked to provide input through a 180-minute meeting discussing the data that had been collected and compiled from all twenty individual interviews with urban Church planters, and which they had received two weeks prior to the meeting. This meeting was facilitated by the author of this study and notes were recorded and summarized by the author.

The focus group included a group of three participants selected for their experience in urban church planting. In addition, one participant is currently working as an organizational psychologist and consultant and was selected with the intention of bringing an outside church planting perspective to the process.[19]

The focus group's interactions were predominantly open discussions based around the data. The focus group conversations were aimed at further interpreting any patterns or trends that might have emerged from the data, thereby revealing equipping needs, which when met, could foster evangelistic leadership capacity in urban church planters.

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18. N. K. Denzin, *The Research Act: A Theoretical Introduction to Sociological Methods* (Chicago, IL: Aldine, 1970), 239, 248.

19. The focus group was limited to three participants intentionally, in order to be proportional to the sample size of the data collected, any more felt impractical, unbalanced and overcrowded.

In addition, each dialogue was focused on evaluating the leadership development process of urban church planters in the light of ongoing equipping needs and recommended training that can meet those developmental needs.

Comparative Analysis and Evaluation

First, the final step in the evaluation process involved a more formal comparative analysis and evaluation of the ongoing vital equipping needs expressed by 20 percent or more of the interview participants. The objective of the evaluation process was to propose an educational emphasis to answer the fourth and final research question: "What key educational changes should be made to better meet the ongoing equipping needs in novice urban church planters?"

Second, feedback from the interview participants and the focus group was factored into this analysis with the objective of discerning the strengths and weakness in light of ongoing equipping needs of novice urban church planers. The next chapter will unpack this question in greater detail.[20]

Lastly, the next chapter integrates the outcomes of the literature review, the biblical and theological literature review, and the data, in order to answer these critical research questions and recommend specific developmental and key educational changes.

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20. Rebuttal of Alternative Approach: One alternative approach that could have been taken in evaluating the effectiveness of urban church plants would have been to conduct a more comprehensive quantitative study based primarily on questionnaires sent to one hundred churches that have plant in global cities. However, there was neither sufficient time nor financial resources to cover such a wide scope. A qualitative study focusing exclusively on 20 out of 100 is of course a very small sample, but it can nevertheless provide a rich, thick and deep sample of the larger narrative.

CHAPTER 5

DISPLAY OF DATA

The result of this study is the identification of ongoing equipping needs in novice urban church planters, which if met, could help foster evangelistic leadership capacity.[1] Specifically, following the methodology outlined in Chapter 4, data collected in response to the third and fourth research questions are displayed in this chapter.

In response to the third research question, the ongoing equipping needs that were highlighted in the individual interviews are presented and categorized in tabular format. Then, using participant quotations, corresponding and representative qualitative comments are used to expand upon the highlighted equipping needs, providing a more detailed analysis.

In response to the fourth research question, feedback from the interviews is summarized. While the focus group was employed only for analytical purposes, this input is integrated as part of the synthesis of Chapter 6 along with the key recommendations to better meet the ongoing training needs in novice urban church planters.

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1. John C. Maxwell, *The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership: Follow Them and People Will Follow You* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2007), 1. Leadership capacity is the lid that determines a person's level of effectiveness in leadership. The higher capacity, the higher potential for greater effectiveness. 2. Equipping needs are essential growth areas and prerequisites in leadership that can expand a leader's potential capacity for greater effectiveness.

Categorization of Highlighted Equipping Needs

For the third research question of this study ("What are the ongoing equipping needs that should be addressed to foster church planting leadership capacity, as identified by urban church planters themselves?"), the data comes from a review of twenty individual interviews with urban church planters in the United States and Canada. The majority of the respondents were primarily Caucasian and Asian. Also, most participants had some theological education and many had Masters' or doctoral level training. Ministry positions of participants varied from leading planters to part of the church planting team. The majority of the participants were part of more than one church plant, occupying various roles. All respondents were limited to planting in an urban context in the United States or Canada.

Table 1: Demographical Data

(Total number of respondents: 20)

Ethnicity	Age	Seminary Education	Role/Experience	Context
AL: African American	Late 40's	DMIN	Lead planter, Assistant planter	Harlem, Manhattan
David: Caucasian	Mid 30's	N/A	Worship pastor, church planting team, Elder.	Brooklyn, Park Slope
Tyler: Caucasian	Mid 30's	N/A	Lead Planter, teaching pastor, planting team	Brooklyn, Williamsburg
Peter: Caucasian	Mid 30's	M.Div.	Lead Planter, church planting team	Downtown, Manhattan
Won: Asian	Mid 40's	M.Div.	Lead Planter, Assistant pastor	Metro NJ
Scottie: Caucasian	Late 60's	M.Div.	Lead Planter, Assistant pastor	Westside Manhattan

Charlie: Caucasian	Mid 30's	M.Div.	Lead Planter, church planting team	Westside Manhattan
Scott: Caucasian	Mid 60's	PHD	Lead Planter, church planting team	East village, Manhattan
Luke: Caucasian	Mid 30's	N/A	Lead planter, Assistant pastor	Nyack, NY
Shawn: Caucasian	Early 40's	M.Div.	Lead planter, Assistant planter	San Diego, CA
Ron: Asian	Early 40's	M.Div.	Leader planter, assistant pastor, youth pastor	Long Island, NY
Derek: Caucasian	Mid 30's	M.Div.	Lead Planter, assistant pastor	Roanoke, VA
Ronnie: African American	Mid 30's	D.Min	Lead Planter, Para church	Cleveland, Ohio
Jude: Asian/ Caucasian	Late 40's	M.A	Co-Planter, Assistant pastor	Toronto, Canada
Dave: Asian	Early 40's	M.Div.	Lead Planter, Senior pastor	Downtown, LA
Joe: Asian	Early 40's	M.Div.	Co-Planter, Worship Leader	Staten Island, New York.
Craig: Caucasian	Late 40's	PHD	Lead planter, Professor	Park Slope, Brooklyn
Calvin: African American	Mid 40's	DMIN	Leader planter, Teaching Pastor	Columbus, Ohio.
Jordan: Caucasian/Asian	Mid 30's	M.Div.	Lead Planter, Assistant pastor	San Jose, CA
Jay: Asian	Mid 40's	M.Div.	Co-Planter, Executive pastor	Metro NJ

Themes were extracted from each transcript and categorized using Burke-Litwin's boxes of organizational performance and change in the analysis. The themes were then tallied, and ordered by frequency.[2] Beyond simply presenting the quantitative data for each category, representative participant quotations were selected to provide a richer

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2. For full interview feedback summary see Appendix 3.

narrative behind the analysis of the data collection for those equipping needs that were

identified by 25 percent of all participants in the study. The following data were

collected:

Table 2: Strengths

(Total number of responses: 27)[3]

Strengths	# of Respondents	%
Community/Relationships	13	65.0%
Also: Fundraising, External support, Commitment, Teaching. Leadership, Evangelism, Theology.	14	<15.0%

Community

First, fostering community and building relationships were the greatest strengths

identified by respondents (Community/relationships 65.0%). Pastors shared stories of

opening up their homes and engaging their communities through meals and community

groups.

One pastor noted:

We built like actual authentic relationships. I feel like we have done a pretty good job in creating a culture in which you know there's no B.S, you don't have to put on a happy face, don't have to act like everything's great because it's really like, living in the city is really tough and balancing work and relationships and some people have young families, and church involvement, it's just not easy. And I am really conscious, most people come to church, there's some deep hurt and deep pain there.[4]

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3. Although there are twenty respondents, there could be more or fewer responses to certain themes from each of the respondent.

4. (Peter 2016)

Another respondent described a learning posture or orientation in the early phase of the

church plant:

> We are going to come and give the city what it needs. We realized we would be doing way more learning than we would be giving people who need help. I think it's still true. I don't think it's ever changed. I do believe because of radically contextualizing and the learning posture, we will learn a little more about the deep needs and the cries of the people of our neighborhood and our city. Which does in turn make us more effective at loving them well.[5]

As with all organizations, entry into the external environment is of primary

importance. Pastors have expressed heavy involvement in the intentional studying of the

local context at the beginning of the church plant, through inviting neighbors to dinner

and hosting small group bible studies. Another pastor described the incredible strength of

their community in this way:

> I think if there were to be things that we feel that God has truly blessed is creating community. We have really really strong community in our neighborhood that truly embody, caring for each other's burdens, and rejoicing with each other's joys. People are sharing possessions, and sharing life which is very remarkable.[6]

These pastors effectively found entry into their local context by building authentic

relationships in their local communities. Although building community was displayed as

a strength for (65.0%) of respondents and this study's focus is primarily on identifying

the vital equipping needs of urban church planters, the overview of this strength

illuminated the value of building bridges in a local context.

Leadership

Three pastors (15%) included leadership as a strength for the organization. One

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5. (Eric 2016)

6. (David 2016)

pastor derived his response from a church that had strong support/mentoring within his family network of churches. "I think it is a God given strength, we're not alone. Eleven other parishes are running in the city. That is a voluntary submission to their friendship and brotherhood and it is not a denominational push."

According to Burke, leadership is about vision; change; using one's intuition, influence, persuasion and presentation skills; rewarding people with personal praise; and providing opportunities to learn new skills.[7] The value of effective leadership is clearly demonstrated in this pastor's family network of churches, and the existence of the other eleven parishes running in the city is clear proof of its leadership efficacy. Also, the external support (15%) this pastor received from his family of churches were the main key factors in the flourishing of this pastor's Parish.

One other pastor referred to the influence of the leadership in the church as a whole as a strength. "I think our church leadership is a definite strength." Observing the interactions in the Burke-Litwin model, it is evident that leadership change and investing in leadership development brings the highest potential for change.

Consequently, studying leadership as a strength or as a vital need in urban church planters is both a positive addition and valuable asset. A greater integration of both of these layers will be further explored later in this chapter.

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7. Burke, *Organization Change,* 231.

Table 3: Weaknesses

(Total number of responses: 37)[8]

Weakness	# of Respondents	%
Finances/Fundraising	9	45.0%
Ethnography/Audience	9	45.0%
Leadership Turnover	8	40.0%
Also: Community, entry barrier, Loss of central purpose, Growth structure concerns, Consumer mentality, Evangelism. Theology.	11	>15.0%

Financial Oversight

First, the most mentioned weakness was related to finances, financial oversight, and fundraising (45%). One pastor, describing his need for further development in this area, said: "The ability to fundraise is a pitfall for so many leaders, you can always get more training in that, because it can be a very financially stressful environment."[9]

Contextualization

Second, the next recurring weakness was related to issues surrounding contextualization and ethnography (45%). One pastor describing his need for further development in this area remarked: "Part of my problem was the demographic we were in the money wasn't there. So we didn't do enough; you know we didn't do ethnography, I didn't know what ethnography was until I got in a doctoral program years later. We

9. (Peter 2016)

didn't do ethnography we didn't really look at how to be financially viable. We didn't know what we were doing."[10]

Leadership Turnover

Third, leadership turnover was the most frequently mentioned weakness after finances and contextual challenges (40%). Two pastors discussed the difficulty of leadership turnover. The following participant highlighted these issues:

> I think there's a high turnover of leaders, more than I would like. People move out. And I'm always looking to put someone else there instead....But they're doing ministries in other places. So you have to replace them and while replacing them, be simultaneously cognizant of raising up new leaders and mentoring.[11]

Another pastor said, "One of the things we don't do well is keep staff. So, we have staff turnover. And all things that are attached to that."[12] The most frequently addressed needs pertained to different dimensions of leadership, namely, a need for coaching, greater leadership experience, organizational leadership and leadership development.

Various Weaknesses

Fourth, the next recurring weaknesses were varied and mixed. The various identified responses (>15.0%) were the following: community entry barrier, loss of central purpose, growth structure concerns, consumer mentality and evangelism. One pastor speaking about the [community entry barrier, 15%] gave the following response:

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10. (Peter 2016)

11. (Charlie 2016)

12. (Scott 2016)

That's the one thing that I feel like we do well, and it comes with a certain cost. And that cost, or shall I say risk is that people who join often find it hard to step into a community that is already formed. So the barrier for new people is real, and so we always want to work hard at how do we help them assimilate to areas of community life.[13]

The same pastor attributed this entry barrier to the [loss of central purpose] and proffered the following response: "The threat is that the easy way to move forward is to rely on whatever reputation we have around the city and around the world, to just keep the machine ticking."[14] Another pastor shared his growth/structural concerns regarding his family of churches in the city. He gave the following response to this issue: "the fact that we're non-denominational, or inter-denominational. And the fact that as we get bigger, it gets more complex, these are my words. What I see happening, is we are essentially having to create a denomination."[15]

This pastor also believed that the continued growth of a more Christian audience replacing unbelievers within the family of churches was already leading the organization toward attrition. They were beginning to miss their target audience of unchurched city dwellers. He offered the following comments: "Are we actually seeing people hear the word and respond... or are we essentially engaging people who have already come from a Christian faith tradition and just happen to live in the area.."[16] This important theme of

13. (David 2016)

14. (David 2016)

15. (Eric 2016)

16. (Eric 2016)

combating a consumerist mentality as the church plant begins to grow was also the focus

of another pastor who presented the following response:

> Like the more you invest in your relationship with God the more you're going to grow. The more you invest in the Christian community the more you're going to experience the joy of the gospel. The more you serve the city, the more you're going to fall in love with it. So I think the leadership is trying to get people out of a consumeristic mentality and to, you are the church, you're called into this, but it's tough when like, people are Yelping to churches.[17]

As more people enter the organization, they bring with them more cultural pressure from

the external environment, a consumer mentality, secular ideologies, or personal

preferences. As the make-up of the church population changes, the mission of the church

begins to shift. Another pastor shared he clearly saw a waning of evangelism, as

consumerism began to corrode the evangelistic intensity of the church.

> We aren't strong evangelistically. And again it is odd to contrast yourself to Redeemer, But the average person coming to New York…because we are so similar …Redeemer does everything to reach the non-Christian. And we get people that are comfortable in the church and they want to community and create a context where again we are probably like any other church. Redeemer does evangelism in everything that they do, that is obvious to me that…where people are dying to bring friends to every Redeemer events…People feel like our church is a place where they can grow, serve and get plugged in.[18]

> The leadership must actively align the culture back to the original mission or this

weakness will eventually lead to attrition and irrelevance.

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17. (Peter 2016)

18. (Scott 2016)

Table 4: Needs

(Total number of responses:47)

Needs	# of Respondents	%
Pastoral coaching	13	65.0%
Finances/resources/fundraising	12	60.0%
Management/Org. Skills	11	55.0%
Also: Better upper mgmt., Leadership development training, Experienced Leadership, Leadership selection, Organizational leadership, Evangelism training, Assessments, Theology, Results/performance measures & stakeholder management Adding value to community	11	<15.%

Various Forms of Coaching

First, the most repeatedly expressed developmental need by respondents were

related to the larger and boarder theme of pastoral coaching. Referring to pastoral

coaching, one participant highlighted the following:

> If I could do it all over again, I would have that [consistent coaching]. Not that I didn't have mentors, to call them and ask, 'Hey I need some help here.' I had that a lot. But I think there's just that consistent coaching that I could have been receiving from someone. I think if I could do anything over, I would definitely do that over. I would have made it consistent, I would have made it just a part of the calendar that I kept for the past six years.[19]

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19. (Won 2016)

The second example highlights coaching or "spiritual direction," as a necessary means in

overcoming leadership hardships. Referring to coaching and spiritual direction, one

participant highlighted the following:

> God loves me and accepts me, yes, I need to know that, it's the core, knowing that
> you're loved is core, but how do you know how to access that as a leader so that
> you can receive criticism constructively and not be defensive. To me there's a
> difference between coaching and spiritual direction. I think, particularly if people
> are on their first time out, they need spiritual direction.[20]

In the third example, one pastor expressed his desire to coach and serve as a

mentor to other church planters as a result of the difficulties he experienced as a church

planter. He wishes to use his experience to improve the outcomes and health of future

church plants. Referring to pastoral coaching, the participant highlighted the following:

> We're working with our class, which is in the reformed churches, which is called
> the Regional body, on coaching.…I've mentored planters; our churches have sent
> out several church planters. And honestly, I don't think I could have done it
> effectively had I not had the experience I had. I had this seared memory of what
> it's like to be that planter. And to try to learn from it and do things differently.[21]

All of these examples above clearly identify the need for consistent coaching/mentoring

in order that novice urban church are mentally and emotionally stable for church

leadership.

Financial Oversight

Second, the most repeated developmental need expressed by respondents after

coaching/mentoring was related to the critical and larger theme of finances. More than

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20. (Scottie 2016)

21. (Scottie 2016)

half (60%) of the respondents expressed a need for additional equipping in finances. A

critical observation one can make from the data is that church-planting pastors must

manage the organization in addition to leading the organization. These planters have

expressed their struggle to manage well. According to one interviewee, pastors must be

equipped to run a small nonprofit business. They must have basic management skills such

as learning how to read a budget, or monthly expenditure. The interviewee expressed the

need for management skills as follows: "I think we need to do a lot more in terms of

equipping planters to run a small business." And basically, how to start a nonprofit, how

to run a business."[22] The church planters identified fundraising responsibilities as the

primary concern and need of church management. However, many pastors do not feel

adequately equipped to fundraise and consistently bring in resources for the church plant.

Referring to fundraising, the following participant highlighted these factors:

> I also think tied to that too is that I had to teach myself how to raise money.
> Raising money is a big part of this. Learning how to work with donors, how to ask
> for money. And second I would say, obviously in global cities the ability to
> fundraise and, you know, both internal stewardship in the church and external
> relationship with denominations, churches, individual donors, that's so crucial.
> That's a pitfall for so many leaders…you can always get more training in that,
> because it can be a very financially stressful environment.[23]

Another critical observation that can be gathered from the data is that

unfortunately, even when the church planter is able to manage well, when the leaders of

an organization spend all their time managing the organization, they are unable to

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22. (Scottie 2016)

23. (Scottie 2016)

adequately lead the organization. There is thus a clear need for the training and

development of pastors as both leaders and managers for successful church planting.

Organizational Leadership

Third, the next need expressed repeatedly by respondents after coaching and

finances was related to developmental areas in organizational leadership and management

skills, representing more than half of the pastors interviewed (55%). Possibly even more

basic to the planting of a church is the need for organizational leadership knowledge, that

is, the knowledge required to lead an organization. The following five examples highlight

the different facets of organizational leadership mentioned.

The first example highlights the need for organizational knowledge. A clear grasp

of organizational leadership structure implies knowledge of subcomponents, and of their

management capabilities (i.e., keeping an organization running through the work of

others). One pastor felt he received no training as it relates to organizational leadership.

He reported:

> Most of our leaders are sitting in presentations like every day that are really,
> really professional, high end, very corporate culture. Super, super engaging and I
> didn't feel like seminary or City to City trained me in how to, really how to run
> like a core team meeting. Or really how to run a leadership team meeting or some
> of the organizational leadership.[24]

When asked about vision, the pastors often stated their mission instead. Most of

the pastors did not identify a specific strategy for accomplishing their vision and mission

beyond planting the church.[25] The pastors briefly mentioned technical level tasks. From

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24. (Peter 2016)

25. There are three components to planning a successful organization: mission, vision, and
strategy. Referring to the Burke-Litwin model, the mission of an organization primarily involves input from

the responses, it was gleaned that church planters did not adequately understand the differences between a vision, a mission and a strategy.

The examples below highlight the church plant's reason for existence, but do not adequately serve as tangible or clearly articulated goals to act as a vision. With reference to mission, three of the participants commented as follows: The first participant said that "the goals are to reach the community, those that don't go to church....So for me it was to reach the community. Reintroduce ourselves and hit the particular interest of young people."

The second interviewee posited, "The ultimate goal is to oversee people coming to Jesus. The last responded asserted, "To love God, to love others. You know, God and make disciples of all nations or as we go do what we are called to do. Live life for his glory, make disciples of all nations. That was the original vision. The mission that should be the mission of all churches."[26]

One observation when evaluating the effectiveness of this area was the strength of the connection between the vision, mission, and strategy and the external environment. If the vision, mission and strategy are not rooted in the external environment, they begin to lose relevance and value.

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the external environment and leadership. Typically, the leadership will articulate the organization's mission in response to the input they receive from the external environment. Mission embodies the leadership's understanding or interpretation of the external environment. Vision refers to the clearly articulated long-term goal of the organization (typically ten to thirty years) Mission is defined as the core purpose of the organization or the reason for its existence. Strategy refers to the unique activities through which a company executes achievement of a mission.

26. (David 2016)

The second example highlights the need for leadership development. Another pastor discussed the necessity for leadership development within church plants to support the growth of that plant. Specifically, this pastor highlighted leadership development as a primary means for transferring and multiplying the mission of the church plant through the training and development of parishioners. He believes the growing church plant cannot rely solely on the leadership of a pastor. The leadership must grow along with the church plant. Referring to leadership development, the participant highlighted these factors: "I think the second thing, here in Park Slope and probably a universal challenge, is the transience of the city. I think the key is going to be leadership development."[27]

The third example highlights the need for additional leadership experience. A pastor highlighted the value and necessity of leadership experience as a prerequisite for church planting. Although different from coaching, this comment on leadership also falls in line with the general need to draw on experience as a church planter, whether that be in the form of personal or shared experience. Referring to experienced leadership, the following participant highlighted these factors: "But you need years under the belt. I say they need grey hair. And I am not an old person ... many have commented that there's just certain things you can't know without years."[28]

The fourth example highlights the need for organizational culture. Culture refers to the collection of overt and covert rules, values and principles that are enduring and that guide organizational behavior. As mentioned numerous times, according to the Burke-

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27. (David 2016)

28. (Eric 2016)

Litwin, culture is strongly influenced by the external environment and the leadership.

Culture influences vision, mission strategy, leadership and to some extent the external

environment.

Generally, the pastors described their church plants as highly communal in nature.

The churches are adept at forming deep relations where qualities like authenticity are

valued. However, one church planter noted that the culture of a close-knit community

comes at the cost of a higher barrier to entry:

> And so we found that our people are really, really good at making friends with
> their neighbors; they love them, they care for them. That's the one thing that I feel
> like we do well, and it comes with a certain cost. And that cost, or shall I say risk,
> is that people who join often find it hard to step into a community that is already
> formed. So the barrier for new people is real, and so we always want to work hard
> at how we help them assimilate to areas of community life.[29]

Clearly you can have an effective and clear mission and strategy for an

organization, but apart from an organizational culture that embodies the vision, this is

like straightening out deck chairs on the Titanic. In other words, it is the culture that

shapes the vision, mission, and strategy of leadership of the church plant, as we have

clearly seen in the last example.

Consequently, the relationship of culture to the organization's vision, mission and

strategy is of paramount importance in creating a transformational culture. For example,

one pastor posited that their evening service caters to a particular type of audience and

the culture that the audience perpetuates is that of introversion. The strength of this

culture may directly contradict and inhibit the expression of the mission and strategy of

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29. (David 2016)

the organization. Referring to his organizational culture, one participant highlighted the following:

> The second component is that by its quiet nature; we were drawing introverted types … we were planted by Redeemer. My question is why would you come to us when there is Redeemer with Tim Keller and great music. The standard response was that it was too big. Morning, there are 150 people … here, I can get to know people. In the evening and showing up with 25 people is great, and the last thing I want to do is invite somebody.[30]

Revisiting the Burke-Litwin model, culture is heavily influenced by the external environment. Thus, environmental factors such as consumerism influence organizational culture. One pastor expressed the difficulty in "getting people out of a consumerist mentality." Unless the leadership is able to lead the organization's culture in a direction that accomplishes the organization's mission, the influence of the external environment on the culture will derail the organization's commitment to its mission. Referring to this form of organizational consumerism the following participant noted:

> The more you invest in your relationship with God the more you're going to grow. The more you invest in the Christian community the more you're going to experience the joy of the gospel. The more you serve the city, the more you're going to fall in love with it. So I think the leadership is trying to get people out of a consumerist mentality and so we say, you are the church, you're called into this, but it's tough when like, people are Yelping to churches.[31]

The fifth example highlights the need for leadership evaluation. Two pastors commented about different facets of performance. One pastor realized the value of generating and utilizing assessments as a means of gauging performance, especially leadership performance. There is a recognition that there must be a means of assessing

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30. (Charlie 2016)

31. (David 2016)

the pastor's "calling" to urban ministry. Referring to assessment and performance, one

participant commented as follows: "I have to say, a lot of my passion has been around ...

internships, around the assessment prep, we act1ually do an assessment, of those who

discern they're called to urban ministry. It's called their seminary training. So we're

actually doing an assessment in seminary, from what we've learned from assessment

processes."[32]

Another pastor noted the connection between fundraising and performance. Specifically,

he noted that district major stakeholders and sponsors demand performance evidence for

their contributions. Without evidence of successful performance, financial donors are

deterred from continuous giving. Referring to the pressure of fundraising and quick

results, the participant commented: "Give people supporting a church plant, suddenly

they want to know how it's going. Missionaries experience this all the time. Well how

many conversions do you have going there? What are you wasting your time for? People

want results."[33]

Key Insights and Findings

From the categorization of the data, the following relationships and patterns were

displayed. Aligning and understanding the church plant change process according to the

Burke-Litwin framework, provides insight into the overall effectiveness of the change

strategy. Most change can be traced back to external drivers. Important elements in

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32. (Scottie 2016)

33. (Scottie 2016)

organizational success such as 1) external environment; [34] 2) mission and strategy; 3) leadership; and 4) organizational culture, are often impacted by changes that derive from outside the organization. In applying the Burke Litwin Model,[35] we have observed the following:
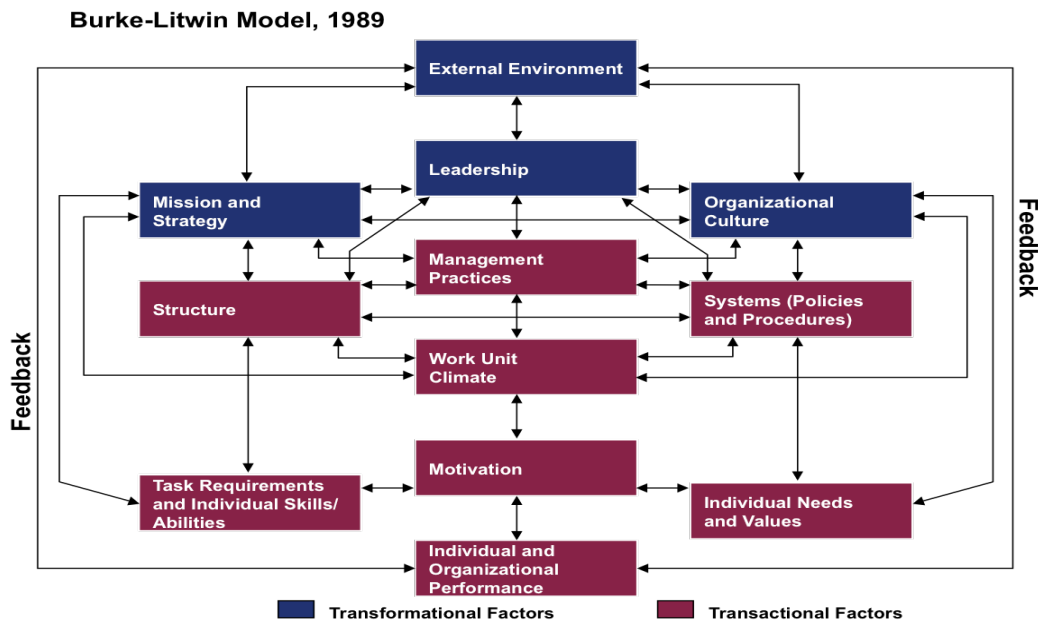
Burke-Litwin Model, 1989

Figure 1: Burke Litwin Model.

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34. Jack Rabin, Gerald Miller, and W. Bartley Hildreth, *Handbook of Strategic anagement* (New York: M. Dekker, 1989), 99. Emery and Trist offer a model that identifies the external environment as a critical driver for change, but offer four different environments an organization might confront. Placid-randomized is the least complex and Turbulent-field is the most complex. Emery and Trist did not suggest specific structural configurations associated with each environmental type. However, the two placid environments should be responded to with technical structures since change is not imminent or predictable, whereas the disturbed and turbulent environments require more intentional structures since change is highly likely. As the external environment becomes more precarious, increasing flexibility is needed to mange the uncertainty that rises.

35. "Systems Theory and Systems Approach to Leadership," accessed January 18, 2017, https://www.researchgate.net/figure/276294845_fig1_Figure-1-Katz-and-Kahn-Open-System-Model). Katz and Kahn's Open system model, like the Burke Litwin model, suggests the external environment, as all the elements outside of the system have the potential to affect all or part of the system. Consequently, feedback or a continuing source of information concerning the relationship with the external environment are used to make the necessary changes in order to survive and to grow.

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External Environment

The external environment is all the external factors outside of the organization's reach that can affect the organization's success. When asked for the narrative of their church plants, pastors described their approach to selecting their location in New York City. These descriptions of selection included, but were not limited to, prayer walks, prayer, divine/peer confirmation, affinity towards a particular location, etc. The descriptions (pastor's perceptions) of the actual urban context (external environment) were varied. Interviewed pastors assessed their environment at a very local level, as a subsection of the city, rather than as the whole city.

Upon selecting the context, pastors shared stories of opening up their homes and engaging their communities through meals and Bible studies. The pastors intentionally listened to the needs present in the community. Some pastors described a learning posture or orientation in this early phase of the church plant. Later in the interview, two pastors explicitly emphasized the need for an ethnographic study of their area. Only later did pastors become aware of the financial viability of planting a church in an area aimed towards a specific demographic. As with all organizations, information from the external environment is primary for the church plant. Consider the following hypothetical model of a church plant's growth over time.

At the beginning of the church plant, pastors have expressed heavy involvement in the intentional studying of the local context: inviting neighbors to dinner, hosting small group bible studies, and engaging the community in prayer walks.

As the organization begins to consume more resources, the financial burden of ministry costs also increases. Fundraising becomes an increasingly important need for the

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sustainability of the organization. The leaders of the organization are pressured to keep up with the financial needs. The data revealed half of the interviewed participants emphasized deep anxiety and emotional stress around the issue of finances. It is apparent from the data that a leader's ability to lead his or her congregation is severely impaired by this issue. The data suggests that not only is the ability to manage finances a vital equipping need, but learning to deal with financial pressure is also of paramount importance.

Mission and Strategy

There are three critical components to planning a successful organization: vision, mission and strategy. Referring to the Burke-Litwin model, the mission of an organization primarily involves input from the external environment and leadership. Typically, the leadership will articulate the organization's mission in response to the input they receive from the external environment. Mission embodies the leadership's understanding or interpretation of the external environment. Strategy refers to the unique activities through which an organization executes achievement of a mission. Consequently, the relationship of culture to the organization's vision, mission and strategy is of paramount importance in creating a transformational culture.

When asked about vision, the pastors often stated their mission instead. Most of the pastors did not identify a specific strategy for accomplishing their vision and mission beyond planting the church. The pastors briefly mentioned technical level tasks. From the responses, it was gleaned that church planters did not adequately understand the differences between a vision, a mission and a strategy.

Leadership

According to Burke, leadership is about vision; change; using one's intuition, influence, persuasion and presentation skills; rewarding people with personal praise; and providing opportunities to learn new skills. Another critical observation we can gather from the data is that unfortunately, even when the church planter is able to manage well, when the leaders of an organization spend all their time managing the organization, they are unable to adequately lead the organization. There is thus a clear need for the training and development of both leaders and managers for successful church planting.

Second, the most repeatedly expressed developmental need by respondents after finances was for coaching and mentoring. As many as 65 percent of all participants expressed a desire for some form of coaching or mentoring. The data seems to be displaying an equipping need felt by a near majority of the pastors interviewed.

Organizational Culture

As more people enter the organization, they bring with them greater cultural pressure from the external environment, for example, a consumer mentality, secular ideology and personal preferences, etc. As the makeup of the church population changes, the mission of the church begins to shift. Although the leadership must actively align the culture back to its original mission, the data points to many leaders often struggling to overcome the influence of the organizational culture and to realign the church with its biblical mission.

In addition to high-level organizational functions, the church plant must also develop the management practices, structures and systems to support growth in people. Observing the

interactions in the Burke-Litwin model, it is evident that leadership has the highest potential for change. Consequently, the successful training of leaders in their understanding of how to influence people and organizations should provide the most benefit.

Summary

The top seven equipping needs identified by participants were, in order of frequency: pastoral coaching (65.0 %); finances/resources/fundraising (60%); management/organization skills (55%); leadership turnover (40%); finances/resources/fundraising (45%); ethnography/identifying target audience (45%); and adding value to community (20%). These figures are significant for several reasons, as identified through the feedback from individual interviews from urban church planters.

First, all of the seven vital equipping needs identified by participants reflect three of the four critical components for fostering a biblical model of evangelistic leadership capacity as displayed in Chapter 2. Further integration of this model will displayed in Chapter 6 along with analysis and recommendations in the study.

Second, from the categorization of the data, the following relationships and patterns were identified. Aligning and understanding the church plant change process according to the Burke-Litwin framework, provided an insight into the overall effectiveness of the change strategy. Most change can be traced back to external drivers.

Lastly, the process of categorizing and quantifying the rich and unique resource of equipping needs highlighted in the individual interviews has clearly answered the fourth research question and also identified the equipping needs expressed by urban church

planters themselves, which if met, could help foster evangelistic leadership capacity. The

next step, of reviewing the reasoning behind the identification of these primary equipping

needs, provides greater qualitative understanding of these needs, and follows in Chapter 6

CHAPTER 6

ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This final chapter addresses the concern noted at the beginning of the study, i.e., that with such attention and activity around church planting today, critical evaluation is imperative. The exploration identified ongoing training needs for novice urban church planters. This task is of paramount importance for optimal kingdom growth and the continual flourishing and vigorous planting of new congregations in cities. This final chapter thus responds to the third and fourth research questions: "What are the ongoing equipping needs that should be addressed to foster evangelistic leadership capacity, as identified by urban church planters themselves? and "What key educational changes should be made to better meet the ongoing equipping needs of novice urban church planters?" The chapter integrates the literature review, the biblical and theological literature review, and the research data, in order to answer these critical research questions and recommend specific key educational changes. This chapter also includes a general overview analysis of the data, and an evaluative review based on input from the focus group.

General Overview

Before evaluating and connecting with the data, the influence of three critical conflicts must be acknowledged. First, there is an inherent conflict in using interviews to evaluate the effectiveness of, and recommend changes to, a church-planting program. While it is important to explore the equipping needs of urban church planters, there is

also the tension of becoming what Brookfield terms an "educational supermarket,"[1] or developing what one participant called a "consumerist mentality."[2]

Ultimately, the most vital equipping of urban church planters needs to be grounded, shaped and warranted by scripture. The first concession is that this study was deeply influenced by participants' personal preferences and emotive impetuses. Clearly an implicit difficulty in this study was the human factor. Knowles argues, "It is almost universally predictable that programs that are based mostly on what somebody thinks people are out to learn will fail."[3] Thus, the evaluation process and recommendations presented are the result of working with and through this conflict.

Second, identifying equipping needs from interviews, and using them as tools for evaluation, cannot be free of external influence or contagion. It is again vital to acknowledge, as Burke-Litwin notes, that participants are not independent from external influence.[4] For instance, although a standardized Burke-Litwin model transcript was used for all the interviews, there is still a possibility of some investigator influence. Other influences may include the values of specific ethnicities, cultures or ministries, or the values of the broader North American or even metropolitan culture. Further external factors could include grief from loss, present moral failings or current crises in the

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1. Stephen Brookfield, *Adult Learners, Adult Education and the Community* (New York: Teacher College, Columbia University, 1984), 98.

2. (Peter 2016)

3. Malcolm Knowles*, Self-directed Learning: A Guide for Learners and Teachers* (New York: Association Press, 1975), 79.

4. See page 57 in this study for the Burke-Litwin chart.

churches. Accordingly, the evaluation process and recommendations presented are a result of working with and through these factors.

Lastly, to avoid a dominant investigator influence, especially during data collection and analysis, an informed decision was made to utilize the Burke-Litwin model for the bulk of the project, rather than integrate the refined praxis of seasoned practitioners as explored in the literature review in Chapter 2, or even the biblical models explored in Chapter 3. Although the biblical model for fostering evangelistic leadership capacity is the ultimate criterion by which all the identified equipping needs were assessed and validated or negated, it was not assumed that the ministry of any single participant was biblically grounded or reflected sound praxis.

Reflections on the Top Seven Identified Equipping Needs

The top seven equipping needs identified by participants were, in order of frequency: pastoral coaching; finances/resources/fundraising; leadership turnover; management/organization skills; finances/resources/fundraising; ethnography/ identifying target audience; and adding value to community. These figures are significant for several reasons, as identified through the input of the focus group.

First, reflecting on the top seven equipping needs, the Teaching Pastor at 180 Church NYC and focus group member, William H. Kim, posited, "It seems like all of the church planters are almost learning how to manage a small business and these are the necessary building blocks in running and operating an effective business."

Second, focus group member and organizational psychologist, Paul Lee, pointed out that these seven equipping needs are "more about business practices than practical

theology, and seeing the leader as a CEO of a company rather than as the traditional pastor, something neither seminaries nor church planting agencies are equipped to tackle."

Third, the researcher of this study, also a member of the focus group, responded to Paul Lee's feedback saying, "I think we also have to consider that church planting is a lot like NASA preparing astronauts to go into space. No matter how much you prepare, no one can ever be really ready enough." These themes will be addressed further in this chapter.

Evaluative Review and Recommendations

This section offers an evaluative review with recommendations for the top seven equipping needs most often identified by more than 20 percent of the participants, along with further integration of the literature review of Chapter 2 and biblical framework of Chapter 3.

In addition, the top seven equipping needs identified by participants were categorized into four broader themes related more comprehensively to urban church planting. The four broader themes that were categorized are: financial oversight, organizational leadership, contextualization, and various models of coaching and mentoring.

Financial Oversight

The top two ongoing equipping needs identified by the majority of all participants related to issues to do with finances as a weakness (45%) or a need for additional training (65%). Finance was also the only equipping need identified more than once by

participants in the top seven, which translated to the majority of all participants

expressing the central need for further equipping in financial oversight. During the

interview one pastor was visibly angry and rancorous during the interview, because he

was deeply overwhelmed and perhaps experiencing psychosomatic symptoms from past

memories. He was sought out by Keller and Redeemer to plant their first daughter church

in the West Village in Manhattan while he was attending seminary. The following quote

is indicative of the reason behind the need to be equipped in financial oversight:

> Now, there were, the biggest pitfall, the biggest challenge we had was money.
> The financial hardship was really tough on our marriage; we didn't have the
> money to make ends meet. That was, at the end of the day, we couldn't create a
> financially viable model. Part of our problem was our demographics, the money
> wasn't there. So we didn't do enough; you know we didn't do ethnography, I
> didn't know what ethnography was until I got in a doctoral program years later.
> We didn't do ethnography; we didn't really look at how to be financially viable.
> We didn't know what we were doing. Redeemer had just a horrific, you know
> there were so many just bad stories of people who worked there and left bitter, or
> things just didn't go well. And none of it was malicious. It had to do with
> management.[5]

According to another pastor, leaders should be equipped to run a small nonprofit

business. They must have basic management skills, such as learning how to read a

budget, and monthly expenditure. The following quote is indicative of the rationale

behind this equipping need: "The ability to fundraise is a pitfall for so many leaders, you

can always get more training in that, because it can be a very financially stressful

environment."[6]

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5. (Scottie 2016)

6. (Peter 2016)

One of the four critical components in fostering a biblical model of evangelistic leadership capacity was thus developing greater competency in financial oversight. Often, while the vision of gospel renewal deeply drives the heart of the organization, economic sustainability is overlooked, bringing about an unhealthy imbalance. The reality is that most leaders planting churches in an urban context will require greater competency and further equipping in the broader and critical realm of financial oversight, since most will have almost no experience outside of managing their personal finances.

As already discussed in the biblical review in Chapter 3, equipping and fostering greater leadership capacity for church planters requires more than a vision of what could be, but also an accurate expectation of what is. According to one pastor, financial viability is just as, or more critical, than the vision of the church, because if there is no option for sustainability, its mission is futile and its work in vain. Although a dynamic tension between faith and realism must exist for optimal effectiveness in the urban church planter, the data demonstrates maintaining a balance is critical. It seems a confluence of spiritual vision and viable praxis must be achieved or ultimately the mission of the church and its leaders' ability to lead will suffer the most.

Respondents overwhelmingly expressed the view that further focus and greater training is still deeply needed in this realm of financial oversight in urban church planting. As explored in the literature review in Chapter 2, another critical map or layer of urban ministry is understanding urban economics. Practitioners doing ministry in urban centers must be equipped to better understand the powerful influence economic factors have on the city overall, and even the ramifications of these economic factors around the world.

An exploration of urbanization through an economic lens was provided by Glaeser, who addressed four unique characteristics of the city that make it truly urban. These four unique characteristics are high productivity, great prosperity, cultural intensity and magnified creativity. The city uniquely creates an environment for extraordinary opportunity, prosperity, and productivity.

The confluence of all these multiple factors fosters a culture of innovation and creativity that is unmatched. The city, in essence, makes culture: as the city goes, so goes the culture.[7] Doing ministry in the context of such ample influences also presents a unique mission. Subsequently, as a direct result of the great prosperity of the city, the cost of church planting is astronomically high. Creating a fiscally sustainable model for an urban context is thus critical for the survival of the ministry.

When observing the data of the number one equipping need identified by majority of all participants in this study, Paul Lee posed this question: "In the corporate sector, although the CEO is updated on financial matters on a need to know basis, her main role is leading the vision of the larger organization and she has the CFO to specially manage the finances, but pastors from this study are doing both. I wonder if that's even possible without hindering leadership capacity?" Hiring a CFO or executive pastor full time is not a financially viable option for most church plants, however.

First, the focus group suggested mobilizing business leaders from local churches and leveraging their financial expertise in partnership with denominational networks to offer workshops, thereby providing additional equipping in many money-related matters

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7. Glaeser, *Triumph of the City*, 7-8.

of running an organization. Such activity would help meet this critical ongoing equipping need of novice urban church planters.

Second, the focus group also suggested that an alternative approach for satisfying this particular critical ongoing training need in novice urban church planters might be directly recruiting more candidates with past business experience. Identifying and mobilizing business leaders from local churches and leveraging their financial expertise directly into the church planting process could prove deeply rewarding for the future of urban church planting.[8]

Coaching/Mentoring

First, the need for pastoral coaching was identified by 65 percent of all participants as being the most important equipping need after financial oversight. Responding to the ongoing need for coaching and mentoring expressed by more than half of the respondents, the researcher of this study referred to the NASA analogy as follows:

> The nature of church planting is more of an adaptive venture than it is a technical endeavor. In other words, issues and problem arise that will always be pervasive and precarious in nature: it is space! I think we also have to consider that church planting is a lot like NASA preparing astronauts to go into space. No matter how much you prepare, no one can ever be really ready enough and ongoing help is critical.

Second, the majority of the participants revealed their sense of disintegration which is a direct result of having to manage so many moving pieces at once. If there was one common phrase pastors used throughout the interviews, it was the following: "I didn't know what I was doing or I didn't know what I should be doing." One pastor's

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8. My mentor for this thesis-project, Dr. Steve Klipowicz, first introduced this idea of recruiting more candidates with past business experience, thereby providing a helpful addition to the data collected from urban church planters.

disintegration and disorientation was so great he confessed to not being able to get out of the bed some days.

> I think my leadership was definitely lacking because I fell into a great depression because everything was falling apart. I was in my 40's and left a comfortable job at a mega church to start this thing and I seriously thought I made the worse decision in my life. My confidence was gone. I just felt crappy about myself and couldn't even get out of bed sometimes. My wife forced me to get counseling because she said she could not recognize me anymore and was sacred.[9]

Third, since the nature of each of the top seven identified equipping needs relates to the disintegration and precarious nature of urban church planting, preparing for the reality of disorientation is not only of paramount importance, but an unassailable ongoing training need for novice urban church planters. One of the critical maps offered by Keller in Chapter 2 addressed the incredible complexity of the city. As a result of multiple factors working simultaneously in urban centers, doing ministry in cities is a complex task. Keller posited that "cities are extremely complex, secular, pluralistic, multi-ethnic places that take a great deal of theological sophistication to navigate."[10] Keller argued that greater complexity requires not only a higher degree of theological sophistication, but also essential multidisciplinary tools in order to process various colliding factors, such as race, economics, and religion. Urbanization is a global phenomenon that is not only reshaping the city (where we live) but also culture (how we live) and this confluence only adds to the complexity.

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9. (Shawn 2017)

10. Tim Keller interview, "New York State of Mind," Winter 2014, accessed March 11, 2016, https://www.rts.edu/Site/Resources/M-L/issues/ML_WINTER_2014.pdf.

In the midst of such complexity, the disorientation and disintegration experienced by novice urban church planters is not a probability, but an inevitability. This is why the majority of respondents expressed a deep desire for feedback, coaching, mentoring, guidance and friendships. This solution is not only practical, but logical. Anyone in this type of precarious environment will desire to connect with their peers and mentors and draw from the previous experiences of others.

Fourth, one of the critical biblical maps explored in the literature review of Chapter 3 had to do with grappling theologically with the great microcosm of the city. Because the city is a place of great cultural intensity and incredible density, everything in the city is both amplified and magnified. The city is the microcosm of humanity and it intensifies the duality in our nature, and hence the confusion.

In addition, the single motif that ran throughout all the interviews was the great sense of loneliness experienced by pastors, and because of the city's incredible density, that loneliness was compounded. Also, as noted in the biblical review, the biblical normalcy of church planting is always anchored in community and never in isolation. Drawing directly from the model Jesus used to equip and deploy his disciples for the task of world evangelization, it is apparent that his vigorous and intentional equipping process began with the external support of his disciples through prayer and deliberate coaching/mentoring. Thus the expressed desire for feedback, mentoring and guidance is not only biblical, but also practical. Anyone in this precarious environment will desire to draw on the previous experiences of others.

Lastly, the theme of coaching and mentoring was addressed under the broader theme of gospel contextualization as one of the four critical components that can help

foster a biblical model of evangelistic leadership capacity in urban church planters, as discussed in Chapter 3.

From an exegetical perspective, it is apparent that world evangelization cannot be accomplished apart from cultivating greater evangelistic leadership capacity in regional leaders. Referring to pastoral coaching, the participant highlighted these factors:

> If I could do it all over again, I would have, not that I didn't have mentors, to call and ask, "Hey I need some help here." I had that a lot. But I think there's just that consistent coaching that I could have been receiving from someone. I think if I could do anything over, I would definitely do that over. I would have made it consistent, I would have made it a part of the calendar that I kept for the past six years.[11]

Similarly, another leader highlighted the value and necessity of leadership experience as a prerequisite for church planting. Although different from coaching, this comment falls in line with the general need of a church planter to draw on experience from others, in the form of personal or shared experiences. Referring to experienced leadership, the participant highlighted the following: "You need years under the belt. I say they need grey hair. And I am not an old person ... many have commented that there's just certain things you can't know without years."[12]

Based on the data, urban church planters seem to desire a greater focus on qualitative coaching and peer relationships than is currently available, however. One important recommendation made by the focus group was that peer cluster groups should be created within a local regional context to meet deliberately on a month to bi-weekly basis. Adding this additional layer would meet the expressed need for deeper

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11. (Charlie 2016)

12. (David 2016)

relationships and address the desire for coaching and mentoring at a peer level. One

pastor, reflecting on his past church planting program, noted the following:

> Just having a classroom of guys who were doing basically what I was hoping to do, but in slightly different contexts; just hearing their stories, hearing their shortfalls, weaknesses, and also their strengths was very good. It is just plain encouraging when you are just learning with guys, making mistakes with guys, again just learning with them. It was very helpful.[13]

Another pastor remarked that "opportunities to interact with other pastors on a consistent

and structured basis is limited due to many competing commitments or distance, but if I

did not have a few pastor friends around me to encourage in those dire moments, I would

not have be in ministry today."[14] Adding this additional layer of consistent and structured

peer clusters would not only help other pastors in times of crisis, but provide the safe

harbor pastors need to flourish in their respective ministries.

Organizational Leadership

Leadership turnover was identified by 40 percent of participants as a weakness,

while management/organizational skill was identified by 55 percent of participants as a

need that required additional focus and equipping. These two top identified needs were

categorized under the broader and critical theme of organizational leadership. Although

there could be some benefit in exploring both leadership turnover and

management/organizational skills separately, the focus group suggested that the

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13. (Peter 2016)

14. (Derek 2017)

confluence of these two top needs, as identified by respondents, pointed to a more pervasive and systemic factor.

In response to this, while reflecting on the top seven equipping needs identified, and especially when dealing with the top four broader themes related to urban church planting, Paul Lee noted the great difficulty in responding to every equipping need and recommended a broader educational model of organizational leadership. Specifically, Lee suggested the following: "It seems to me after reflecting and working through the data of the most vital equipping needs expressed by participants, the responses greater than 55 percent were overwhelmingly related to the broader scope of organizational leadership."

One of the four critical components of a biblical model of evangelistic leadership capacity, as discussed in Chapter 3, is the integration of organizational leadership with evangelistic leadership. Heifetz considers it part of the leader's role to know if change is progressing at a rate that people can accept.[15] In other words, leadership is centrally about managing the expectations of others, hence its difficulty. Klimoski explains the management of the expectations of others in these terms:

> The leader must guide the process-from the initial discussions, through planning, to approving and implementing the decision. This insures a place that allows enough time for consulting broadly, working through differences, and reaching agreement without losing momentum and draining people of enthusiasm and interest.[16]

Turnover in leadership seems to be more closely related to the broader theme of organizational leadership capacity than simply being an isolated issue in urban church

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15. Klimoski et al., *Educating Leaders for Ministry*, 170.

16. Klimoski, et al., *Educating Leaders for Ministry*, 170.

planting. Possibly even more critical to the planting of a church is the need for the

knowledge required to lead an organization. This would also imply knowledge of

organizations, their subcomponents, and knowledge of management (keeping an

organization running through the work of others). The following pastor felt he had

received no training in relation to organizational leadership:

> Most of our leaders are sitting in presentations every day that are really, really professional, high end, very high end corporate culture. Super, super engaging and I didn't feel Seminary or City to City trained me in how to really run a core team meeting. Or really how to run a leadership team meeting. Or some of the organizational leadership stuff.[17]

That management/organizational skills were identified by 55 percent of participants as a

need that required additional attention seems to relate to the broader need to expand

organizational leadership capacity in urban church planters. One pastor, referring to his

lack of training in management and organization, put it thus:

> The biggest felt need that I had adjusting to ministry was a time management organization component. I personally work well with organizations, but I didn't have the tools. I didn't know how to use technology to schedule things up and make sure I was following up, because we are a small church and as a church plant, I wanted to do various things.[18]

When asked about vision, pastors often articulated their mission instead. Most pastors did

not identify a specific strategy for accomplishing their vision and mission beyond

planting the church. Pastors briefly mentioned tasks at the tactical level. From the

responses, it was evident that church planters did not adequately understand the

differences between a vision, a mission and a strategy. The examples below highlight the

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17. (Peter 2016)

18. (Scott 2016)

reasons for the church plant's existence, but do not adequately serve as tangible or clearly

articulated goals to serve as a vision.

William Kim, responding to respondents' confusion relating to their context,

remarked: "One concern when evaluating the effectiveness of this issue is in the strength

of the connection between the vision, mission, and strategy and the external environment.

If the vision of the church plant does not factor the external environment, its existence

will be already tragically obsolete before it even launches." This point also relates to

another recurring weakness expressed by 45 percent of the respondents, i.e., issues

surrounding contextualization, which will be addressed further in this chapter. One

pastor, describing his need for further development in this area, said:

> Part of my problem was the demographic we were in the money wasn't there. So
> we didn't do enough; you know we didn't do ethnography, I didn't know what
> ethnography was until I got in a doctoral program years later. We didn't do
> ethnography; we didn't really look at how to be financially viable. We didn't
> know what we were doing.[19]

Another critical map explored in Chapter 2 concerned the importance of

leveraging the power of organizational leadership in an urban church context. Tim Keller,

while narrating the history of Redeemer, considers one of the darkest and most difficult

moments in his personal ministry to be a direct result of the lack of structured leadership

available in Redeemer:

> As the staff continued to grow, my span of care was not stretched past breaking
> point and I was giving inadequate supervision. The staff hated this and was
> discouraged. Physically and emotionally 1993 was almost certainly the hardest
> year for me. I was pretty dangerously exhausted. Thus, a search was made for an
> executive pastor who would function as Co-Senior Pastor and director of
> operations. Dick Kaufmann was hired and went on to completely revise the

19. (Scottie 2016)

structure of the ministry. Under Dick, Redeemer's leadership decentralized into empowered leadership teams. Dick's detailed management of process slowly transformed us. Redeemer began to grow at a greater pace again from a place of stagnation.[20]

Exploring the tumultuous leadership challenge Redeemer faced in 1993 provides a good case study in why organizational structure is vital in expanding evangelistic leadership capacity in urban church planters. Keller explains that integrating the organizational leadership structure was the third great ministry watershed moment in Redeemer's history. The first two were the founding of the church as a super-outward faced evangelistic body, and the re-orientation of the fellowship into a cell model. As a result, the newly-integrated organizational leadership structure, along with its super-outward facing evangelistic body, amplified Redeemer's witness to a whole new stratosphere in the city. Keller credits Redeemer becoming a global church planting movement with a focus on reaching large cities as the direct result of this alteration to the organizational structure.[21]

First, the focus group again suggested that mobilizing business leaders from local churches, and leveraging their corporate expertise in partnership with denominational networks through workshops, would meet the critical ongoing need for equipping in organizational management.

Second, the focus group also suggested that another approach to this critical ongoing training need might be to directly recruit more candidates with past government, or large nonprofit business experience. Identifying and mobilizing business and civic

20. *Redeemer Church Planting Center Manual* (2002), 17.

21. *Redeemer Church Planting Center Manual* (2002), 17.

professionals from local churches and leveraging their management expertise directly into the church planting process could prove deeply rewarding for the future of urban church planting.

The third recommendation was to mobilize business leaders and leverage their corporate expertise in partnership with local seminaries and denominational networks in the form of an organizational leadership course for credit or audit.

Contextualization

Ethnography was identified by 45 percent of participants as a weakness or a need,[22] while adding value to the community was identified by 20 percent of participants as a need requiring additional attention. The addition of these two top identified needs resulted in 65 percent of respondents expressing a need for additional equipping in this area. Although, there could be some benefit in exploring these two identified needs separately, the focus group suggested that the confluence of these two top needs as identified by respondents pointed to a more systemic factor relating to contextualization.

Another critical map explored in Chapter 2 was how key practitioners address the nature of the urban environment through an experiential lens. Identification of the two major factors characterizing the urban environment—its complexity and pluralism—led to an examination of the generalizations and biases of evangelicalism towards the city.

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22. "Ethnography." The study and systematic recording of human cultures; *also*: a descriptive work produced from such research, Merriam Webster, accessed January 19, 2017, https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/ethnography.

The literature review explored the equipping needs that should be addressed in order to foster evangelistic leadership capacity in urban church planters.

The ongoing equipping need that emerges first from the analysis is the requirement for a renewed theology of the city. Um and Buzzard point out that the wider Christian community paints cities as places that are full of temptation, crime, and grime, and that are congested and uncomfortable. This they call evangelicalism's default definition.[23] The complexity of the city exposes the insularity of evangelicalism, its propensity toward cultural homogeneity, and its dislike of complexity. This default negative perception has certainly kept evangelicals mostly out of cities, thereby tragically forfeiting the potential to renew the city with the power of the gospel.[24]

The truth is one cannot genuinely engage with a city one has been taught to fear. Cities need to be seen as holy also, for what makes them sacred is not their topography or massive density, but God's redemptive destiny. A great deal of theological sophistication is thus required to navigate through the triangulation of the city's pluralism, uniqueness, and diversity. Church planting in the midst of great complexity also requires further analysis of the external environment and the surrounding context in the pre-planting phase.

The second ongoing equipping need that emerges from the analysis is the requirement for greater gospel fluency. Keller argued that to maintain a ministry in an intensely pluralistic culture, or to expand and equip evangelistic leadership capacity for

23. Um and Buzzard, *Why Cities Matter,* 16.

24. Ed Stetzer, Micah Fries, and Daniel Im, "The State of New Churches in the U.S.A," accessed Dec 28, 2015, https://newchurches.com.

urban church planters, requires not only gospel competency, but also gospel fluency. Sensitivity to other cultures and viewpoints is needed, and also a keen understanding of how and when to present the gospel both explicitly and implicitly.[25] Villafane asserted, "One's religious experience is mediated through one's cultural reality. Without the particular ethnic background, the universal principles applicable to our time would be meaningless."[26] It is the height of imperialistic evangelism to assume automatically that there is no gospel witness among a particular ethnic group and that we are the ones to bring it.

Villafane notes that in order to develop a greater gospel fluency, cultivating a multi-ethnic consciousness is also imperative. It is of paramount importance that urban church planters grapple critically with the complexity of presenting the gospel in a pluralistic culture, and that they learn how to navigate effectively in such a culture.

The city is pluralistic. As mentioned before, cities are not only the most unreached, but also the most unchurched, and for good reason. The confluence of secularization and urbanization is curating a unique context where people of different socio-economic classes, religions, and races live in close proximity with one another. Although such diversity can be deeply enriching, it is also considerably challenging. As a result, greater gospel fluency will help urban church planters to minister more efficiently in a deeply pluralistic culture. Gospel fluency will help urban church planters develop a

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25. Tim Keller. "Preaching Amid Pluralism," *Christianity Today* (Winter 2002), accessed March 17, 2016, http://www.christianitytoday.com/le/2002/winter/1.34.html.

26. Villafane, *Seek the Peace of the City*, 44.

greater sensitivity to other cultures and viewpoints, especially when it comes to gospel proclamation and evangelistic outreach.

The third ongoing equipping need is the requirement for a greater multi-ethnic consciousness. A new spiritual renaissance is emerging in many urban centers around the world as minority groups and working-class immigrants deviate from the dominant cultural position toward faith. Practitioners ministering in global cities thus require not only additional cross-cultural training, but must also grapple with how immigration is reshaping the center of the city and its culture toward faith and spirituality.

In Keller's ministry experience, the outflow of urbanization is the direct result of the increasingly multi-ethnic younger professionals and working-class immigrants flooding the city and looking for faith. In other words, immigration has changed the trajectory of faith and spirituality in the city. Although the older white people who run the cultural business of the city are very atheistic and secular, religious belief is growing rapidly within multicultural pockets of working class immigrants migrating into the city. The fact is, the American church is already going through an ontological shift toward a multi-ethnic consciousness, as minority groups and working-class immigrants reshape the urban church.[27]

The fourth ongoing equipping need explored in the biblical and theological review in Chapter 3 was the critical need for contextualization in urban ministry. One of the four critical components in fostering a biblical model of evangelistic leadership capacity in urban church planters was the integration of gospel contextualization with

27. Rah, *The Next Evangelicalism*, 12.

evangelistic leadership. Here the model Jesus used to deploy emerging leaders for the task of world evangelization began with contextualizing the gospel.

As Lesslie Newbigin notes, "We must start with the basic fact that there is no such thing as a pure gospel if by that is meant something which is not embodied in a culture. Every interpretation of the gospel is embodied in some cultural form."[28] Contextualization was not optional for the apostles or the early church; they were in essence cultural architects who studied deeply and grasped intricately the complexity of their particular context. This great task and challenge is not at all new, but is still absolutely necessary for effective gospel witness. Gospel contextualization is a missiological instrument utilized when communicating the gospel in any cultural situation, especially when the cultural and historical context moves further away from its Jewish context. In a sense, the practice of gospel contextualization bridges and differentiates the central message of the gospel within both cultures.

Lastly, another critical map explored in the biblical review was the need for theological balance. Um and Buzzard posit that Christians make two equally harmful theological blunders in their approach to the city, in either aborting their worldview or privatizing their worldview. Neither of these effects happens overnight— they are trajectories that begin as one first takes on a posture toward the city.[29] Um and Buzzard offer two critical theological maps for use when contextualizing the gospel in an urban context.

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28. Lesslie Newbigin, *The Gospel in a Pluralist Society*, 144.

29. Um and Buzzard, *Why Cities Matter,* 91-92.

First, privatizing one's worldview leads to cultural irrelevance. As mentioned already in this chapter, one clear way to evaluate the efficacy of an urban church plant is to measure its impact on the external environment. Clearly if the vision of the church plant does not impact the external environment, its existence will be obsolete before it even launches. This is why theological tension is both good and healthy; the conflict leads urban church planters away from both errors and propels leaders toward a healthy balance.

Second, aborting one's worldview leads to cultural impotence. Michael Horton asserts that the church has already over adapted itself and reflects an "ultra consumerist culture" which is consummated in postmodernism. Horton believes the church is in great danger of apostasy and of forfeiting the gospel.[30] This is precisely why gospel centeredness and cultural relevance must be a both/and rather than an either/or in the urban church. In order for novice urban church planters to be effective in engaging with the culture, these two must live in constant tension.

While deliberating with the focus group, Paul Lee remarked: "As Burke-Litwin note, if the vision, mission and strategy of the leader are not rooted in the external environment, they begin to lose relevance and value." This point also relates to the recurring weakness expressed by 45 percent of the respondents related to issues surrounding contextualization and ethnography. One pastor, visibly upset when describing his lack of training in this critical area of his leadership, gave this response:

> Part of my problem was the demographic we were in, the money wasn't there. So
> we didn't do enough; you know we didn't do ethnography, I didn't know what

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30. Michael Horton, *Emerging Church; Five Perspectives* (Grand Rapids MI: Zondervan, 2003), 111.

ethnography was until I got in a doctoral program years later. We didn't do ethnography; we didn't really look at how to be financially viable. We didn't know what we were doing. Redeemer had just a horrific, you know there were so many just bad stories of people who worked there and left bitter, or things just didn't go. And none it was malicious. It had to do with management.[31]

Swinton and Mowat suggest that the ultimate goal of practical theology is "to explore the complex dynamics of particular situations to enable the development of a transformative and illuminating understanding of what is going on in these situations."[32] Possibly even more basic to the planting of a church is first truly developing a transforming understanding of the external environment of the church plant. Thus, if novice urban church planters can develop a transforming understanding of their external environment, they can also transform that environment with the gospel.

Key Findings and Broader Applications

As with all organizations, information from the external environment [input] is of primary importance for the church plant. Pastors have expressed heavy involvement in the intentional study of the local context at the beginning of the church plant, through inviting neighbors to dinner and hosting small group bible studies, for example, or engaging the community in prayer walks. As the church plant organization begins to grow, the scope of the other boxes in the Burke-Litwin model must also grow.

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31. (Scott 2016)

32. John Swinton and Harriet Mowat, *Practical Theology and Qualitative Research* (London, UK: SCM Press, 2006), v.

Critical Financial Issues

As the organization begins to consume more resources, the financial burden of ministry costs also increases. Fundraising becomes an increasingly important need for the sustainability of the organization. The leaders of the organization are pressured to keep up with the financial needs.

Critical People Issues

As more people enter the organization, they bring with them cultural pressure from the external environment, a consumer mentality, secular ideologies, or personal preferences. As the make-up of the church population changes, the mission of the church begins to shift. The leadership must actively align the culture back to the original mission. In addition to high-level organizational functions, the church plant must also develop the management practices, structures, and systems to support the growth in people.

Broader Recommendations

From observing the interactions in the Burke-Litwin model, it is evident that leadership change and investing in leadership development brings the highest potential for change. Thus the successful training of leaders in understanding how to influence people and organizations should provide the most benefit.

In addition to the need for training, planting pastors have expressed a desire for experienced mentors and coaches. They wish to draw upon experience. Establishing communities of practice in which discussions about church leadership and management

are regular, may alleviate the feelings of isolation that church-planting leaders experience.

It would also be worthwhile for the leadership to understand the nuanced differences between vision, mission, and strategy. When change occurs at an accelerated rate, the leadership has to edit their vision, mission and strategy periodically, in order to maintain relevance to the community/external environment.

Fundraising has been identified as a critical challenge in the growth and maintenance of the church plant. Linked to fundraising is the need for organizational performance assessments. The availability of information for donors and stakeholders on the performance of the organization is an under-explored and under-utilized area in most church plants.

Additional Research Possibilities

After reviewing the data, the feedback group recommended that there would be value in additional related research in the future. For example, the issue of equipping needs factored in terms of the participants' ages and former ministry experience was suggested as one possible research avenue. In addition, further exploration of the possible correlation or lack thereof between the biblical models for fostering evangelistic leadership capacity and the participants' current praxis was also recommended. Such research could examine the confluence between various equipping needs and explore additional motifs and layers within each of these. Lastly, increasing the sample size of participants five-fold and measuring if the top seven equipping needs already identified remain central was also raised as a potentially valuable research venture.

Summary

By exploring the strengths and weaknesses of urban church planters through twenty individual interviews, the study identified ongoing training needs that are critical for novice urban church planters. Seven significant recommendations were made in this chapter to better focus on the ongoing training needs in novice urban church planters.

These recommendations include introducing collaboration between church planting networks and local seminaries in order to tackle the ongoing training needs of novice urban church planters; and mobilizing business leaders to mentor, teach classes and hold workshops on various topics such as fundraising, budgeting, accounting, and best business practices as these relate to financial oversight. It would also be beneficial to mobilize organizational and corporate leaders to mentor, teach classes and hold workshops on various topics such as developing organizational skills and basic management and how these relate to the broader theme of organizational leadership. The creation of a new module on organizational leadership and financial oversight was also proposed for all church planting networks, along with the suggestion that local seminaries add an in-depth course on organizational leadership and financial oversight for audit or for credit. It was also recommended that church planting networks recruit future urban church planters who have some business and corporate leadership experience. Lastly came the recommendation to create regional peer cluster groups that meet together at least twelve times a year.

In conclusion, through a collection of interviews with urban church planters, this study identified the top seven ongoing equipping needs for novice urban church planters,

which, if met, would foster and expand evangelistic leadership capacity in urban church planters. Then, utilizing a biblical and theologically integrated model for fostering evangelistic leadership capacity, the study identified a biblical model for urban church planting. This timely study provides an opportunity for church planting agencies and various denominations to sharpen their focus on continued and improved development, in order to meet the ongoing training needs of novice urban church planters. For others, this study demonstrates an ongoing need for evaluative reflection and continuous improvement in equipping church planters in an urban context. After all, cities matter deeply to God and so they should matter to us.

APPENDIX 1

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Interview Guide

Good morning [afternoon]. My name is _____ and I am working with Sam Kim as part of his efforts to collect information to understand the church planter's equipping needs for his study with GCTS. I appreciate the time you have taken for this meeting.

My team has asked you to participate because you are an important member of the Church Planting team with valuable insight into the relationship between equipping needs and the urban context. I will interview you and the other key urban planters for 30 minutes to discuss the issues below.

My team is conducting interviews to:
*   Help us better understand the leadership's perspective of…
*   Help us identify how the leadership impacts blank structure and culture

In sum, the goal of the interviews is to develop a foundation of information that will ensure that the next steps are designed to effectively collect critical data. Ultimately, the information we collect, will equipping programs to better understand each church's organizational state to better equip future urban church planters.

We will ensure confidentiality by replacing names and other identifying markers in the interview notes. Specific individuals will not be identified during the study or in future aggregate data.

Please note that I will record and take notes during the interview. By contributing to this effort, you will help to inform the urban church planer's understanding of equipping needs and aid in the future preparation of church planters.

Do you have any questions before we begin?

If you have any (other) questions during the interview, feel free to express them at any time.

Interview Questions *[Notes in Italics]*

1.   How long have you worked here? How long have you worked in your current role? What are your key responsibilities?

Probe: How do you fit into the leadership? What sets you apart from the rest of the leadership (i.e. experience; knowledge; position; authority)? [Juxtapose with other

leaders in the organization] What are other member's expectations of you and your work? Are they realistic?

[Leadership/Relationships] The purpose of this question is to build rapport and get a sense of what this interview candidate brings to the leadership. Are there any unique factors that differentiate this leader's opinion from other leaders?

2.   Can you tell us about the narrative of your church plant? What was the mission/vision/strategy going in to the church plant? What were the goals of the church plant?

Probe: If applicable, describe the first 2 years? Between second and fifth years? Any other major events or turning points the church as experienced?

[Mission/Strategy] The purpose of this question is to understand the history of the church. What was/is its raison deterring?

3.   As an insider of the leadership, what are some of the things that your church does well? Specifically, how does the leadership contribute to this success? Are there any specific actions, roles or responsibilities of the leadership that allows for this success?

Probe: How has your training contributed to the success? Level of Communication/ teamwork/cooperation within leadership, specific relationships within the leadership that contribute to success; Accountability network; Communication with other organizations; Communication of vision/strategies/goals;

[Organizational performance/Leadership/Culture/Relationships] This question begins with an open-ended response to the areas of success of the church. The question then informs the respondent to consider his/her/leadership's role in contributing to this success. The interviewer will probe for the root contributors to success.

4.   Not everything in an organization runs flawlessly. In your experience, what is not working so well with your church? How does the leadership influence these outcomes?

Probe: Culture; member motivation; Level of communication/teamwork/cooperation within leadership, Specific relationships within the leadership; Accountability; Communication with other organizations; Communication of vision/strategies/goals;

[Organizational performance/Leadership/Culture/Relationships] This open-ended question is to identify the struggles of the organization and the specific challenges needing to be addressed by the next general manager. The question then informs the respondent to consider the leadership's role in contributing to this difficulty. The interviewer will probe for the root contributors to difficulty. This information will be used as discussion points for focus groups.

5.   As you think back to the issues you identified during our discussion; if you were to change three things in order to improve the engagement and conversion of new believers in your church, what would it be? What is your rationale?

Probe: Is there anything from the urban context [external environment] that informs your recommendations?

[External Environment] This question seeks to validate the previous question as well as identify key factors in the external environment that may drive future organizational decisions.

6.   As you can imagine, conducting a data collection process is a very important effort that we are just in the early stages of beginning. As you think about this initiative, what advice can you give us? (Things we should do? Things we should not do?).

This question is to identify contributing factors that have not been explored.

Closing Remarks

The interview is now complete.

As a reminder, we will ensure that no individuals can be identified during the study or in future aggregate data by replacing names and other identifying markers in the interview notes.

Next Steps: Following this interview, the consulting team will produce a survey to capture the general sentiment and understanding of Town Opera employees. We will also develop focus groups that will further explore the key areas you have described to better understanding Town opera. We will keep you updated throughout the process.

Your input will help to inform our understanding of equipping needs and the training of the next generation of church planters.

Thank you again for your time and support in this initiative.

APPENDIX 2

INTERVIEW FULL DATA SUMMARY

Table 1A

		EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT	VISION	MISSION	STRATEGY
Descriptions			*Vision addresses the future and concerns aspirations and desired outcomes. Vision is emotional and often reflects passion that organizational members feel, especially leaders. Vision statements can be lofty and imply challenge and a stretch for the organization over the next 3 to 5 years. Vision is more about leadership.*	*Mission concerns what the organization is all about, its purpose, its primary goals. Mission is current. Mission is tied directly to the core competencies of the organization and provides an answer to the question, "if this organization did not exist, what difference would it make?"*	*Strategy concerns the how, or implementation, that is, how the mission is to be accomplished*
Al	1	Harlem: extensive description throughout interview.		[Engaging Secular] the goals are to reach the community, those that don't go to church .... So for me it was to reach the community. Reintroduce ourselves and hit the particular interest of young people.	[Engaging the Secular] do that by Friday night live, ... open mic, ... DJ, music and we have popcorn. All of those things that we like on a regular day. And even Movie Nights to bring people into the church and introduce them to Jesus ... greatest catalyst has been the Prayer Walks that we brought here. That engaged the community, but not just say we do a prayer walk with our heads in the sand, but any issues that are going on we want you to know that we're hands on with that with the men, or if there's a problem with shooting, drugs,

					we want to be hands on with that so that we can transform the community and that has been working so far.
David	2			[Conversion] The ultimate goal is to oversee people coming to Jesus. [Learning posture/Strategy] we are going to come and be a blessing to this city, we are going to come and give the city what it needs. We realized we would be doing way more learning than we would be giving people who need help. I think it's still true. I don't think it's ever changed. I do believe because of radically contextualizing and the learning posture, we will learn a little more about the deep needs and the cries of the people of our neighborhood and our city. Which does in turn make us more effective at loving them well.	
Tyler	3	[understanding of context] But the Parish Idea was that the person who lives in Chelsea, is probably going to have a different sort of just come from someone who lives in Washington Heights. Chances are someone that lives in Washington Heights for generations, has a very different life, than someone that lives in Tribeca for the last 2-3 years because they worked on Wall street. There's just different people in different pockets in the city			[Local Well] I think the idea was, we have to, one of the original analogies, ___ might have been ___. It was: Instead of building fences, trying to corral everybody into this one thing that we're doing, the idea was to have wells all over the city. Each one would essentially be customized. Not to look and sound like the people, but that a pastor would truly be able to

					know his parishioners.
Peter	4	[Understanding Context] Folks in Seattle, I would say the definition of the good life, is work hard enough to have time for recreation and there is a lot of greed. There's a lot of greed and pride. In work and definition of worth just like NY. But the level and pace and lifestyle. People work in offices, but they can ski after work or on weekends. Whereas here, you work, work and work.		8 million lonely people and connecting them to God and each other. And That's really what drove us to want to start the church. And to work also in the areas of economic justice, to bring together the richest people in the world and the poorest people in the world. Because they all kind of live together in the neighborhood. And just to have a church that's not just ethnically diverse but socio-economically diverse. Those two things, connection and economic justice are what drove us to want to start the church and pick up our life in Seattle and move out here.	5 values: Discipleship-becoming more like Jesus. Worship-worshipping the true lord. Evangelism-sharing our faith, Loving the Bowery - doing outreach and loving not with a strategy or looking for some result but … and the second L is Learning to Pray.
		[Understanding Context] I think they did a really good job at helping us understand the people that are here. The diversity of people that are in the world. The deeply secular nature of New Yorkers and how to contextualize the gospel. And definitely has been huge for us, that and a lot of conversations		[mission] The vision is Connecting the mission of God to the Bowery. that you know, basically, has 3 parts: by connecting, I alluded to in the narrative, the mission of God, not just saving souls but redeeming every square inch of creation. And then the Bowery is just a starting point for our church	
Won	5			[Local church] And our vision was to reflect the demographic, to the best that we could, of the context that we were called to plant. The greater fort lee area. What I refer to it as. [Generic Mission] To love God to love others. You know, God and make disciples of all nations or as we go do what we are called to do. Live life for his glory make disciples of all nations and that was the original vision. The mission, that should be	That's our vision, reflect, preach the gospel, live it out, and reflect the glory of God. And just to the best of our ability, intentionally reflect the demographic of the area to the best that we could. And church plant. Definitely church plant.

				the mission of all churches.	
Charlie and Scott	6 & 7	[University/Harlem] We are right next to Columbia University. I like university churches, and like working with students, so at a certain point in the early spring of 2000, I took a prayer walk up the West Side, Manhattan on Broadway and I walked all the way to Columbus Circle all the way here and when I crossed 110th street and moved in the Columbia neighborhood, everything about the vibe got hold of me. And the students and the internationality, the musicians, and the proximity to Harlem and I said this is what I wanted to do.		[Race and SES Diversity] My vision was to try to plant a church that was diverse and not just racially diverse, but socio-economically diverse, which is a harder nut to crack. But, the proximity of Harlem which is downhill, if it can be done, we have all the proximity we need to get it done. I wanted a church was gospel-centered, diverse socio-economically and racially and proximate as much as possible with God in its diversity. I wanted a church that was strong in community and small group life was very important from the gecko. I wanted a church that was merciful and deeply committed to impacting sort of incarnational ministry, caring for your friends and caring for the people who are closest to you.	
Scottie	8	We wanna see Greenwich Village become a place where Jesus is renowned honored and conserved.			
Shawn	9	Existence exists because people matter to God in the city of San Diego.	Reach young professionals and married people to Christ.	Leadership trains the lay-people do become the hands and feet of Jesus. "inclusive missional community."	Through Sunday services and small groups train the church to think missional.
Luke	10	Becoming a life giving Community and safe place for people to find healing in Christ.	Serve burnt out Christians and just people burnt by life find a safe harbor.	Family concept of church, I have the core team coming to my house and help taking out the trash almost on a daily basis.	Missional commutes, We don't want to become like a mega church or something, we want to become many small missional communities broken up into small groups working for the common good.

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Ron	11	Reaching American born Chinese young adults and young married couples in Long Island.	Be a healing community for those who are broken by life and the pressure to perform in an Asian context.		
Derek	12	Reaching unchurch and many de-churched folks in the largest city in VA.	Showing especially De-churched folks and families that the local church can be a safe and healthy place for God's glory.	Potlucks, Dinners and that small time	
Dchoi	13	Reaching Young Professionals and young married couples in downtown LA.	[Evangelism] My vision was to reach the lost and disconnected people to God in downtown LA.		
Joe	14	[Context] Staten Island, New York.	To be the hands and feet of Jesus on a daily basis.	[outreach] Engaging the poor, immigrants and unchurched in Staten Island, New York.	After school programs, Ferry outreach.
Jordan	15	[Context]San Jose. it is now a bedroom community for Silicon Valley made up of a diverse population from around the world..	We have built on the foundation of the past and currently we are a thriving church reaching the families in Almaden Valley, San Jose and beyond		
Craig	16	[Context]Park Slope, Brooklyn	Engage the dechurched and unchurched in Park slope.	Ministering to rich and poor disparity in park slope with the gospel	Teach English as a second language, computers class and etc.
Calvin	17	[Context Columbus, Ohio. & Cleveland.	a vision to be a multicultural, intergenerational community of people living out God's plans and purpose for our lives.		Community Service, Service outreach.
Jay	18	[Context Metro NJ, Bergen County.	Developing leaders so effectively the church will still exist a 100 years from now when I'm long gone.		
Judith	19	[Context Downtown, Toronto	Small missional family that can replant many small families.	Small Groups	
Ronnie	20	Cleveland, Ohio	Making Disciples.	Preaching and teaching of the word	Bible Studies.

Reflections		The description of their urban context [external environment] is varied. Pastors assess their environment at a very local level, a subsection of their cities. What is the pastor's and church's level of understanding of local community? The community's pain points? The community's needs? The community make up? Ethnography needed prior to church plant to assess the financial viability of planting a church.	When asked about vision, pastors often stated their mission. Pastors must understand the difference between Vision, Mission and Strategy Vision - BHAG - Big hairy audacious		Very few churches had discussed an actual strategy for the church plant during the interview. There were many tactical level tasks.

TABLE 1B

		OTHER GOALS	LEADERSHIP	ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE	STRENGTHS
Descriptions			*Leadership is about vision; change; using one's intuition, influence, persuasive and presentation skills; and rewarding people with personal praise and providing opportunities to learn new skills* *Management is about role, task accomplishments, setting objectives, and using the organization's resources efficiently and effectively, and rewarding people with extrinsic factors such as money, titles, and promotions.*		
Al	1		Teaching and bringing Bible study together and engaging community.		(Leadership) I think our church leadership is definitely a strength.
David	2			And so we found that our people are really really good at making friends with their neighbors. They love them, they care for them.	[Community] I think if there were to be things that we feel that God has truly blessed is creating community. We have really really strong community in our neighborhood that truly embody, caring for each other's burdens, and

					rejoicing with each other's joys. People are sharing possessions, and sharing life which is very. very remarkable. [External Support] The second thing is, and I think a God given strength, we're not alone. 11 other parishes are running in the city. That is a voluntary submission to their friendship and brotherhood and it is not a denominational push. [Commitment] all of us have a radical commitment
Eric	3		[Role] I am the music director worship leader at Park Slope parish in Brooklyn, but I was also, for about 5 years, doing that same thing at Chelsea parish, and I still do the Chelsea thing in the evening. I do the music there 16 times a year. Just to give them a different voice. They have a full time music director but I help them, kind of give her a break and just provide a different voice once in awhile. [Inspiring/Influential] i think that these guys, I think that they speak to people's hearts and desires. because they themselves have walked through some fire. And the nature this city is that if you are crazy enough to come here to be a church planter, it's immense pressure.	[Young culture] Like practically speaking, we're really good at celebrating and really good at being at weddings. but we don't bury many people here. I don't say that flippantly. We don't mourn, we don't do many hospital visits, and that simply because we're mostly very young. What the parishes often look like is something like a college or post-college ministry. Which is beautiful, incredibly beautiful, maybe that's the nature of New York, a transient city,	[Leadership - inspiring/influence]
Peter	4	We want to see lives transformed and also the community. And we want it to grow to the point, you know	[Motivated Leader] Yeah, i think in the next 10 years I would love to be able to plant another church or even a granddaughter church. And that feels like so far away	Deep relationships valued, authenticity valued	[Deep relationships] Like actually authentic relationships. I feel like we have done a pretty good job in creating a culture in which you know there's no bullshit,

		we talk about spiritual growth, relational growth, and financial growth. We wanted to grow all through this area to the point that we could start another church in an another neighborhood	right now, but i still have that dream for the city.		you don't have to put on a happy face, don't have to act like everything's great because it's really like, living in the city is really tough and balancing work and relationships and some people have young families, and church involvement, it's just not easy. And I am really conscious, most people come to church, there's some deep hurt and deep pain there.
Won	5		[Role] role is essentially just Casting Vision and clarifying it and even, you know, I guess, modifying it as we live out our life as a church. And Preaching and teaching, shepherding the flock through equipping them for gospel ministry. Pastors aren't called to do everything, but they are called to equip people for the ministry. And um Pastoral Care. Counseling. And the overseeing of a variety of ministries, community group ministries we have oversight over. I think that about sums it up. [leadership metaphor] pace setters. We all refer to that, we need to be the pace setters as pastors and leaders for our people to see and learn from.		[Community] people enjoy being together and even beyond that they really understand the importance of life together and koinonia, participation investment and yeah, extending to one another in grace and engaging in one another. And not just the easy one another, but even the tough one another, that we're called to live out. rebuking one another, speaking truth to one another.
Charlie and Scott	6 & 7		[Role] I Oversee the leaders in the church in the big picture. Scott overseeing plenty of leaders. So, I set the agenda. I set the direction of the preaching in the morning service. Scott oversees the evening service.	[Introverted] The second component is that by its quiet nature, we were drawing introverted types … we were planted by Redeemer. My question is that why would you come to us when Redeemer has Tim Keller and great music. The standard response was	[Teaching] We teach well. Worship well. I think we aren't strong with disciplining people as we wish we were. We like to do a better job at it. I think we do children's ministry well. [Community] organic community. But the organic meaning, we are not doing love because

Name	#				
			We share the preaching in the morning service … the big service … but I do more of it. The particular aspect of our ministry, I oversee the adult education. I oversee international student ministry. I oversee the philosophy of worship and the prayer ministry of the church. Scott has the evening … when we started the evening service, we gave that to him. So, he's got total responsibility and the running of it. But, in the morning I am overseeing the service and the structure. Categories are general pastoral duties. Teaching, preaching, worship, reading, meeting with people for console and prayer. In terms of leadership development in the church, I oversee the mercy team, which is our outreach … our children's ministry and the Sunday morning praise band music. And fellowship	that it was too big. Morning, there are 150 people … here, I can get to know people. In the evening and showing up with 25 people is great, and the last thing I want to do is invite somebody.	we set it up to do it. In other words, people come to us and looking for friendship and they form, not through a program, but it happens well in our church.
Scott	8	One part of a movement fueled by prayer and we wanna fill this city with churches that are filled with people … whose lives radiate the reign of god. They really are a son and foretaste of what god's kingdom is about. These will be people who were gracious; we were already thinking that people who			

		really were generous, kind, thoughtful, who saw their work as vocation, who cared about justice, who cared about immigration, all these kinds of issues, these are things that we'd be passionate about and frankly a little bit of the edge was I wanted us to be a little more politically upfront than what we saw at Redeemer so we were a little more upfront about political issues and justice issues.		
Shawn	9	[theology}Good stewardship apart from good theology is impossible. This is another goal of ours. We want to teach people how to become better disciples.	As the lead pastor, I strive to develop my staff to have an inclusive, missional DNA. That's my main job. Or we'll never accomplish our vision.		[Community] Although we are a church of 600, our greatest strength is our small groups ministry. Those groups, serve together, eat together and help this church feel like home.
Luke	10	To provide safe harbor to those who are hurting.			[Community] I have leaders an members coming to my house on a daily basis, throwing out my trash in the pre-plant phase. It really embodies we're not a church, but more of a family. It must be give and take.
Ron	11	Healing for the broken and hurting.			[Community] my gift as a leader is to be there for someone deeply one on one really well and I think this created a culture of care and deep relationships.
Derek	12	Teaching our community, the analogy of the church as God's family.		[Barrier to Entry] In fact, our church serves a lot of dechurched folks who felt just drained and burnt out by church in their childhood or as adults. They have find a safe place here to recover. So that's	[Community] For the first 15 in our pre-plant phase, we held a family potluck on a monthly basis, so many people felt part of the family, we still eat together till this day. There is a strong sense of family at our church.

				huge part of our culture.	
Dave	13	I wanted to reach immigrants near our church apart from upper mobile Asian Americans, but but the crowd in the church was very resistant.	I think my leadership was definitely lacking because I fell into a great depression when I was in my 40's and left a mega church to start this church and things wee falling apart. My confidence was gone. I just felt crappy about myself and couldn't even get out of bed sometimes.	[Insularity] The great strength in our community was awesome for the current members, but because we were so close knit it became an barrier for others to come in.	[community] I strength was definitely community. We really got to know each other really well and loved each other deeply, perhaps that is why we stayed pretty small.
Joe	14	Our after school program serves the community and families in our context. This becomes a bridge to connect with families.		Missional DNA. Everyone in our church is trained to ask to each other: who is on the verge of coming to Christ this moth? What do we have to do to get them to the finish line?	[Evangelism] [community] Our main strength was that our community was definitely committed together to love people in our neighborhood.
Jordan	15				{Community] As our church was a replant and down to about 25 people and since then we have grown to about 150. Taking the challenge of replanting this 150-year-old church together for God's glory really brought the core team together.
Craig	16	We got a grant to teach new computer skills to single moms and teach English as a second language to the immigrant community around us.			[Community] As a church of 50, our strength was definitely community. We would do life together, eat together and suffer together. And our church was very diverse the power of community was a very compelling narrative in our church.
Calvin	17	Becoming a Intergenerational and multi-ethnic church.			[Community] When you walk people through recovery from drug addition, you really learn the power of community.
Jay	18				[Theology}
Judith	19				

Ronnie	20				
Tally			Preaching Teaching Worship Oversee leadership casting and clarifying vision equipping people influential	Introverted Young Forming Community Deep authentic relationships Insularity	In order of frequency: Community/Relationships13 leadership 2 fundraising 1 external support 1 commitment 1 teaching 1 evangelism 2 Theology 2
Reflections			Very minimal expression of leadership behavior in their role as pastors.		[fundraising] The frequency of the topic of fundraising may have implications for the availability of managers or management skills in the church, that is, effectively using resources.

TABLE 1C

		WEAKNESSES	NEEDS	INSIGHT
Descriptions				
Al	1	[Turnover] I think there's a high turnover of leaders, more than I would like. People move out. And I'm always looking to put someone else in their stead ... But they're doing ministries in other places. So you have to replace them and while simultaneously replacing them being cognizant of raising up new leaders and mentoring.	[Resources/Fundraising] I need more resources. I am not good at raising support.	[Prayer training]
David	2	[Entry] That's the one thing that i feel like we do well, and it comes with a certain cost. And that cost, or shall I say risk is that people who join often find it hard to step into a community that is already formed. So the barrier for new people is real, and so we always want to work hard at how do we help them assimilate to areas of community life.	[Leadership development] I think the second thing, here in Park Slope and probably universal challenge is the transience of the city. I think the key is more going to be leadership development. [Adding value to the community] one of the big things the church needs right now is a better example to the world, so that people from the outside can go, man we actually do really need the church. They're amazing people. We don't believe what they believe, but we love them and we need them. So that is permission to play, that's not	Leader development process is the primary place in which vision can get transferred. And then the secondary one will be small groups. Smaller groups who embrace the vision and are geared towards discipleship. And then only third preaching.

		[Loss of central purpose] The threat is that the easy way to move forward is to rely on whatever reputation we have around the city and around the world, to just keep the machine ticking	going to convince them to believe. But if you don't have that, they're not even going to listen to you. [Evangelism Training] one of the big things of the church needs right now is a better example to the world, so that people from the outside can go, man we actually do really need the church. They're amazing people. We don't believe what they believe, but we love them and we need them. So that is permission to play, that's not going to convince them to believe. But if you don't have that, they're not even going to listen to you.	
Eric	3	[Growth Concern/structure] the fact that we're non-denominational, or inter-denominational. And the fact that as we get bigger. As it gets more complex, these are my words. What I see happening, is we are essentially having to create a denomination [Missing the target audience] are we actually seeing people hear the word and respond ... or are we essentially engaging people who have already come from a Christian faith tradition and just happen to live in the area.	[Experienced Leadership] But you need years under the belt, I say. They need grey hair. And I am not an old person ... many have commented that there's just certain things you can't know without years. [Fundraising] And there's this tension to raise money, and once you're raising money. [Results/performance measures/stakeholder management] Give people supporting a church plant, suddenly they want to know how it's going. Missionaries experience this all the time. Well, how many conversions do you have got going there. What are you wasting your time for? People want results.	
Peter	4	[Challenge: Consumer Mentality] Like the more you invest in your relationship with God the more you're going to grow. The more you invest in the Christian community the more you're going to experience the joy of the gospel. The more you serve the city, the more you're going to fall in love with it. So I think the leadership is trying to get people out of a consumeristic mentality and to, you are the church, you're called into this, but it's tough when like, people are Yelping to churches.	[Organizational Leadership] Most of our leaders are sitting in presentations like every day that are really really professional, high end, very corporate culture. Super super engaging and I didn't feel like seminary or City to City trained me in how to, really how to run like a core team meeting. Or really how to run a leadership team meeting. Or some of the organizational leadership stuff. [Fundraising] And second I would say, obviously like in global cities the ability to fundraise and you know both internal stewardship in the church and external relationship with denominations, churches,	[Partners/External Support] Another really important thing was the camaraderie or spiritual support I felt from the staff members but also from the other guys going through the program with me. And I still have that. We've fostered those relationships in those 2 years and we were doing it … and they're people that I look to and rely on.

			individual donors, that's so crucial. That's a pitfall for so many leaders, that I don't, you can always get more training in that, because it's uh, it can be a very financially stressful environment.	
Won	5	[Resources and Funding] finding a space, having a space and funding a space. Those things are always, you know, complicated and plain and simple expected in metro NYC.	[Pastoral Coaching/Experience] But coaching, if I could do it all over again, I would have um, not that I didn't have mentors, to call them and ask, hey I need some help here. I had that a lot. But I think there's just that consistent coaching that I could have been receiving from someone. I think if I could do anything over, I would definitely do that over. I would have made it consistent, I would have made it just a part of the calendar that I kept for the past 6 years. [communication] As we've grown we've realized people need to be in the loop.	[Partners/External Support] just having a Classroom of guys who were doing basically what I was hoping to do but in slightly different contexts just hearing their stories, hearing their shortfalls, weaknesses, and also their strengths was very good. It was just plain encouraging when you are just learning with guys, making mistakes with guys, again just learning with them, it was very helpful. The curriculum that we went over was solid. It was, yeah, redeemer started in 89, 99, 2009, So, I mean 20 plus years of experience and yeah put into a church planting equipping course. Can't go too wrong with that. What they learned in the city, in metro New York, also through the mistakes they've made was invaluable. [navigating Greiner's life-cycle model] organizational cycle, you start off grass roots everyone starts off passionate. And as you grow you start becoming a little more structured, people start losing that passion. Bureaucracy, blue tape starts getting in the way of making decisions.
Charlie and Scott	6 & 7	[Evangelism] We aren't strong evangelistically. And again it is odd to contrast yourself to Redeemer. But the average person coming to New York … because we are so similar … people who want to an exciting church would be thinking of Hillsong. But, the terms of people in our culture, Redeemer does everything to reach the non-Christian. And we get people that are comfortable in the church and they want to community and create a context where again we are probably like any other church. Redeemer does evangelism in every point	[Management and Organization] The biggest felt need that I have adjusting to a ministry was a time management organization component. I personally work well with organizations, but I didn't have the tools. I didn't know how to use technology to schedule things up and make sure I am following up because we are a small church and as a church plant, I wanted to various things.	What we found in a couple of years is the socio-economic … racial group right away. We have more Asia and Asian-Americans in our church than white people even though both our pastors are white guys. But, there is strong cultural affinity for us to the university and the professional group. The socio-economic diversity didn't happen. And we have to go back to the vision and think about what to do about that. Should the vision really push us to against the reality we are experiencing or should we just face the

		that they do, that is obvious to me that … where people are dying to bring friends to every Redeemer event … where Emmanuel is a place I can grow, serve and get plugged in. I think we aren't strong evangelistically, except this international group that Charlie is leading and that's where we are seeing evangelism there. [Staff Turnover] One of the things we don't do well is very difficult to keep staff. So, we have staff turnover. And a all things that attached to that		reality. And I decided that probably for us to reach the socio-economic diversity, we would have to change the way we worship and change the way I preach and call to response … less content over given use of time and I thought to myself, it would be insulting to the people I am trying to reach and it wouldn't be me. And … And running the risk of who we are reaching. We found university people staying and especially graduate students, they were like falling off a log. They just came. We didn't have to work every hard. They just came.
Scott	8	[Finances/Fundraising] Now, there were, the biggest pitfall, the biggest challenge we had was money. The financial hardship was really tough on our marriage, we didn't have the money to make ends meet. That was, at the end of the day, we couldn't create a financially viable model. [Ethnography] Part of my problem was the demographic we were in the money wasn't there. So we didn't do enough; you know we didn't do ethnography, I didn't know what ethnography was until I got in a doctoral program years later. We didn't do ethnography we didn't really look at how to be financially viable. We didn't know what we were doing.	[Support] Even though I supposedly had a coach I really felt like I had been thrown to the wolves and there really was no lifeline there really was no support. [Assessments] I have to say, a lot of my passion has been around the ... internship, around the assessment prep, we actually do an assessment, of those who discern they're called to Urban ministry. It's called their seminary training. So we're actually doing an assessment in seminary, from what we've learned from assessment processes. [Coaching] We're working with our class, which is in the reformed churches, which is called the Regional body, on coaching. And A lot of my passion as a senior pastor I've sent out daughter ... I've mentored planters, our churches have sent out several church planters. And honestly, I don't think I could have done it effectively had I not had the experience I had. I had this seared memory of what it's like to be that planter. And to try to learn from it and do things differently [Management Skills] I think we need to do a lot more in terms of equipping planters to run a small business. I didn't know how to read a budget, in terms of monthly expenses what's coming in, what's going out, I just didn't get a lot of training. And basically, how to start a	[Capturing Data] It was that process of gathering different people; beginning to listen deeply to who was coming around. Who left and why they left. [Leader/manager qualities] the person planting needs to be psychologically stable and they need to be at a place in their spiritual life where they really do have, like they have the spiritual practice where they have a life with god both when it's good and when it's bad. Because you know as a planter, somebody asks you how it's going, you're never happy with it. You're never ever happy with it. So I think even when you're succeeding, you're never really happy with it. You see what it could be. You see all the stuff that's wrong. [Leadership Qualities] So I think when we send out planters we really need to make sure that we've scanned for the pathologies, that this is a really spiritually healthy person who has, in terms of their marriage, in terms of their own prayer life, they've got a little bit of experience and they are resilient. They're self-starters. You have to be somebody who can get up and make it happen when nobody thinks you can. I just think Tim emphasized that with me tremendously and I think I still put that on top of

			nonprofit, how to run a business. [Fundraising] I also think tied to that too is that, I had to teach myself how to raise money. Raising money is a big part of this. Learning how to work with donors, how to ask for money, [Leadership] I think a big part of it is understanding, what it means to be a non-anxious presence in a system who is not reactive but is able to be present and directive with empathy. When you're a planter you're just gonna get bucket loads of criticism. [Better Management] Redeemer had just a horrific, you know there were so many just bad stories of people who worked there and left bitter, or things just didn't go well. And none it was malicious. It had to do with management. [Coaching] god loves me and accepts me, yes, I need to know that, it's the core, knowing that you're loved is core but how do you know how to access that as a leader so that you can receive criticism constructively and not be defensive. To me there's a difference between coaching and spiritual direction. I think particularly if people are on their first time out they need spiritual direction.	my list. That to me is part of the gifting. [Leadership Behavior/Need] I found there were other things like constantly communicating vision, motivating people, that all came naturally to me.

| Shawn | 9 | [Theology] When We planted I was 25, now I'm 40. I had no idea what church governance was, who should be elders? Can women teach in the church? Now, 15 years later the church is split down the middle since we didn't a clear ecclesiology.

[Turnover] It is very difficult to keep leaders for the long time since our city is highly mobile and most people are moving almost ever four years | [Stewardship/Finances/Skills] virtually had no training in how to fund a church plant or how to maintain it, I think we got lucky with some financial savvy elders, who eventually took over this area for us. The elders asked me, how it is even possible for you to live on this salary? We really didn't' know what we were doing. We read some books, but it was a steep learning curve. | [Fundraising] There should be greater focus on this for the long term mental health of the pastor, it is difficult to lead when you are stressed. Ministry is already stressful enough.

[Theology] A clear ecclesiology and clear mission statement before the church begins will help the church avoid painful spits and conflict. |

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		[Ethnography/context] 176 moved or transferred jobs last year alone. For a church of 500 that is a lot.	Mentoring] church planting and mentoring should be inseparable. When mentoring/coaching is not available that is a death nail for the church plant.	
Luke	10	[Leadership/MGT Skills] I had no idea, what I was really doing when it came to finances, how to read a budget or create one. Maybe that is why we closed. [Turnover] right in the middle of the plant, we lost an elder and that was fatal for us because he was supposed to be my coach and he was doing a great job. That turnover was really crippling for me. [Ethnography/context] I had no idea what I was doing or who I was trying to reach. I just read some books on planting and just jumped.	[Mentoring/Exe. Coaching] I think more than any other equipping need, I desperately needed an executive coach, who could process with me how to reflect on problems, solutions, direction and even what I should be doing and etc. I was so lost on my own. [Fundraising] I hated asking people for money, I didn't know how to do it, or what I should say or even who to ask outside my family. I'm really terrible at it.	[Finances] I think future church plants need to come up with new innovative new ways to raise revenue for mission, without funds it is almost impossible to get anything done, because money consumes most of your time.
Ron	11	[Peer coaching/Friendship] Sometimes I fall into a pit of depression and I just couldn't shake it off or get out of it you know. I don't' get the results I want, and I feel like I suck, and people don't like me and without friends to help me out of it, I would have definitely quit. [Ethnography/context] Asian born Chinese Americans really need a local church in Long Island, but I wonder if we really will be able to establish a critical mass. I'm really stressed out by it. It has been a real struggle. [Turnover] Getting a lunch team was so difficult and some people just bailed. People are always talking about how burn out they are from church. So that has been a major problem.	[Mentoring/Coaching] I beginning to really dislike acronyms in denominations training programs. I feel like just like a number and everything seems so fake sometimes. I want a person, to speak to me and tackle my problems than just address what is trending on twitter! I want someone there with me, speaking to me like a person and not a number. [Finances] I personally had to get a lot of help from Business minded people in our core team about budgeting and accounting etc., I definitely need more training in that area. [Adding value to community.] Again, Asian born Chinese Americans really need a local church in Long Island. How do we reach them? We're trying to go out to the neighborhood and offer children programs like VBS and etc, we're still learning to add value to our context.	[External Support/mentoring] You can't do it alone, get mentors and friends around you or else. I know I can't. church planting is the hardest and most humbling experience I had to endure. We need a lot of help and support.

| Derek | 12 | [Ethnography/context]

So many people in our community have been burnt by church or personally lost faith, getting them to commit to Christ or the community has been challenging. | [Coaching/Friends] opportunities to interact with other pastors on a consistent and structured basis is limited due to many competing commitments or just distance, but if I did not have a few pastor friends around me encourage me in those dire moments, I would not been in ministry today.

[Finances]
I think our church plant in the beginning was definitely limited by finances, I mean we made do with what we had, but things could have been a lot more optimal with more resources. | |
| Dave | 13 | [Finances] I wish I was taught more about budgeting and accounting before I planted, it was not like we could pay someone else to do it and I really didn't know what I was doing.

[Ethnography/context]
I think LA is hard to reach because there are so many churches, church plants usually attract people who are burnt out by the church and are not looking to jump right in. The common phrase I heard from a lot of folks were: "I need some rest." | [Coaching/Friends] I think my leadership was definitely lacking because I fell into a great depression because everything was falling apart. I was in my 40's and left a comfortable job at a mega church to start this thing and I seriously thought I made the worse decision in my life. My confidence was gone. I just felt crappy about myself and couldn't even get out of bed sometimes. My wife forced me to get counseling because she said she could not recognize me anymore and was sacred

[Skills] I think I needed more training on how to mange my time, resources and just overall management better. Coming from a big church I always had an assistant and external staff to help me, but in a church plant I realized I had to do all those many little things. | |

Joe	14	[Turnover] I think the stability of our church was really challenged by few moral failures of key leaders in our community, it is really hard to bounce back from that as a community and even get back the same trust again. [Finances] I had the landlord and credit card companies calling me on a weekly basis. It was so stressful. God always somehow pulled through, but I must of aged at least a decade more!	Peer coaching/Friendship] Being the main leader, loneliness was really difficult to mange, who can I share my struggles with? that was a big conflict for me. Who were my friends really? And with so much time being spent in ministry, it was difficult developing deep relationships outside the church. Also, I think not not being married definitely increased the loneliness. [Ethnography/context] We started as a church of young adults at first, but we kept seeing young adults transfer jobs to metro NJ or Manhattan. So we definitely had to stop and evaluate our context again. [Adding value to community.] So we had to learn how to reach the community again, and we started with an outreach toward youth and families by offering an after school program helping kids with their school work and SAT prep.	

Jordan	15	[Mentoring/Peer-Coaching] The beginning was really hard for me, I mean I was at a church of 1000 and had so many friends on staff that when I walked into the office.. I would have to pull myself away to get any work done! From that to virtually not having anyone to talk to in a home office was rough.	[Leadership/MGT Skills} I never realized coming from a large church that administration took that much work and effort to integrate to accomplish your vision and goals! Since I was used to having that stuff taken care of by our admin staff, I have no idea those little skills would be so critical.	[Adding value to Community] we're still learning to how to add value to our context and surrounding communities. Feeding the poor, opening our church to the homeless and feeding them was a good start.
Craig	16	[Finances] I felt like I was always "broke" and always worried about how to put food on the table you know? Just surviving to make ends meat absolutely brings so much more stress than it is necessary.	[Finances] I think having enough financial support is the most critical need in urban ministry. Raising funds, working with donors is paramount to an emotionally healthy and stable leader.	[Adding value to Community] Getting this neighborhood to trust is difficult. We're trying our best to offer computer classes and English as a second language to really try to meet of those needs in our community.
Calvin	17	[Turnover] Crowds are fickle man, making disciples isn't easy. We had a lot of turnover in	[Leadership/MGT Skills] I think vision is always the easy part, but managing the vision with the right set of	

		the beginning of the plant. Perhaps that goes back to needing greater mgt skills to develop the best strategy necessary to actually accomplish our vision.	skills and strategy is perhaps even a greater need than the vision itself. [Peer coaching/Friendship] I think planting this church with co-pastors really helped me alleviate that pressure to preform. And like the trinity (father, Spirit and son) I enjoy the relationship I have with my co-lead pastors. I don't carry all the responsibility or burden myself… we're sharing the burden.	
Jay	18	[Finances] Money always limits us I feel like. How much we can do and why not. [Theology] I feel like a lot of churches and pastors do not really understand what the gospel is.	[Mentoring/Coaching] I think having someone walked besides you in the journey is so helpful since church planting/ministry in generally is so stressful. [Ethnography/context] I feel like we're not attracting much of the younger twenty something crowd because we lack the demographic in our community. Even though, there are so many them in our area.	[Theology] Like I said before, I feel like a lot of churches and pastors do not really understand what the gospel is. I think the gospel has to be always first, for there to be true life change.
Jude	19	[Fundraising] I feel like raising money becomes the main motif of the church plant, and if you are always meeting people to raise funds, when do you get around to do evangelism?	[Mentoring/Coaching] You know, having an arm around shoulder when you are struggling from a good friend goes such a long way. How many of us would still be in ministry without those arms? [Leadership/MGT Skills] I'm inept in like business stuff, if I needed more help in anything, it would be more like in that area. I'm so much stronger in the community aspect of the church plant.	
Ronnie	20	[Fundraising] Raising money was pretty hard for me. Teaching is really my main gift and mentoring people. Raising money always seemed to move me away from the things I love to do. [Turnover] I think it was hard to keep leaders for a long period of time because they kept leaving for larger churches. So in that sense it was counterintuitive to grow the church.	[Leadership/MGT Skills] Reflecting back, I wish I had a sharper vision and also a better way to convey that vision to the people. And also better management skills, I was good at teaching the bible, but not so much in leading teams in the executive role. I wish I had more equipping in that regard.	

Tally		In order of frequency: Finances/Fundraising 13 Ethnography/Identifying Target audience 9 Turnover 8 3 or less Loss of central purpose growth structure concerns Entry Barrier, consumer mentality, evangelism, Theology.	Needs: Coaching/Mentoring 13 Management/Org.Skills 11 Finances/Fundraising 9 Adding value to Community 4 3 or less Better upper mgmt. Leadership development training, Experienced Leadership Leadership selection, Organizational leadership, Evangelism training, Assessments, Results/performance measures & stakeholder management, Theology.	
Reflections		[fundraising 13] The frequency of the topic of fundraising may have implications for the availability of managers or management skills in the church, that is, effectively using resources. [Ethnography 9] Majority of leaders were struggling to understand or reach their external environment. Burke-Litwin factors that this as the most transformative factor to an organization trying to bring about change.	[Coaching/Mentoring 13] The most identified need was peer or mentoring friendships. Many pastors struggle with a deep sense of disintegration and loneliness. [Financial viability 9] Overall theme related to money, the question if the external environment can be financial self-sustaining? Very minimal expression of leadership behavior in their role as pastors.	

APPENDIX 3

RECOMMENDATION

 (1.) Financial Oversight

a. Introducing a collaboration between church planting networks and local seminaries to partner together to tackle the ongoing training needs of novice urban church planters. A confluence and partnership between these two organizations could be worth exploring and potentially very rewarding for both.

b. Mobilizing business leaders to teach classes and hold workshops on fundraising, budgeting, accounting and other money related matters in running an organization.

c. Adding a new educational focus on "Financial oversight" to the modules in the overall church-planting curriculum by all church planting networks.

d. Church planting networks recruiting directly future novice urban church planters with some business and corporate leadership experience was also recommended.

(2.) The Creation of Peer Cluster Groups/Coaching

a. Creating a new cluster of peer groups for urban church planters regionally. Adding peer groups will meet one of the most identified need for intimacy in relationships and desire for coaching and mentoring in a peer level.

(3.) Organizational Leadership

a. Mobilizing organizational and corporate leaders to teach classes and hold additional workshops on various topics such as developing organizational skills, basic management. Possibly even more primary to the planting of a church is the need for organizational leadership knowledge, that is, the knowledge required to lead an organization.

b. offering an organizational leadership class for credit or audit through a partnership between local seminaries and church planting networks.

APPENDIX 4

OVERVIEW OF THE BURKE-LITWIN MODEL CHART

Burke-Litwin Model, 1989
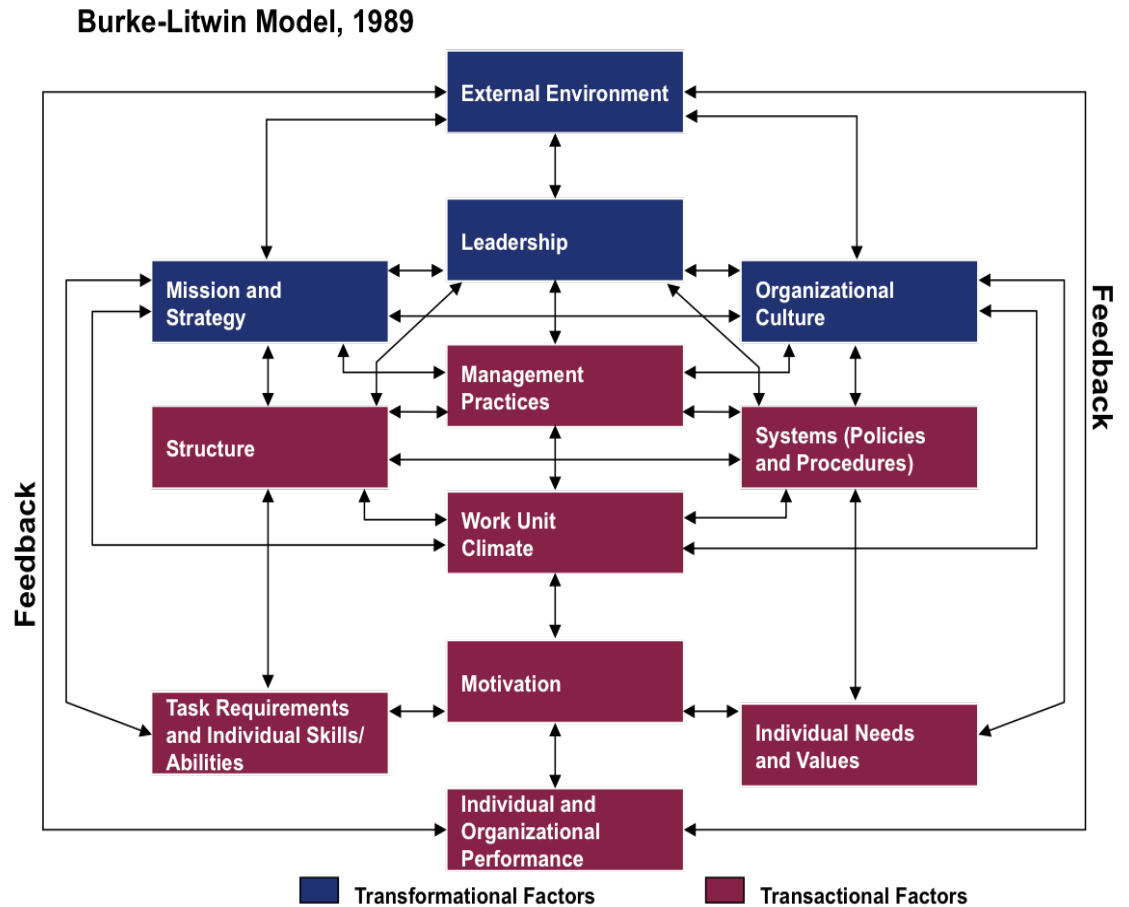
Organizational Diagnosis
By applying the Burke Litwin Model, we have observed the following:

External Environment
The external environment is all the external factors outside of the company's reach that can affect the organization's success.

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